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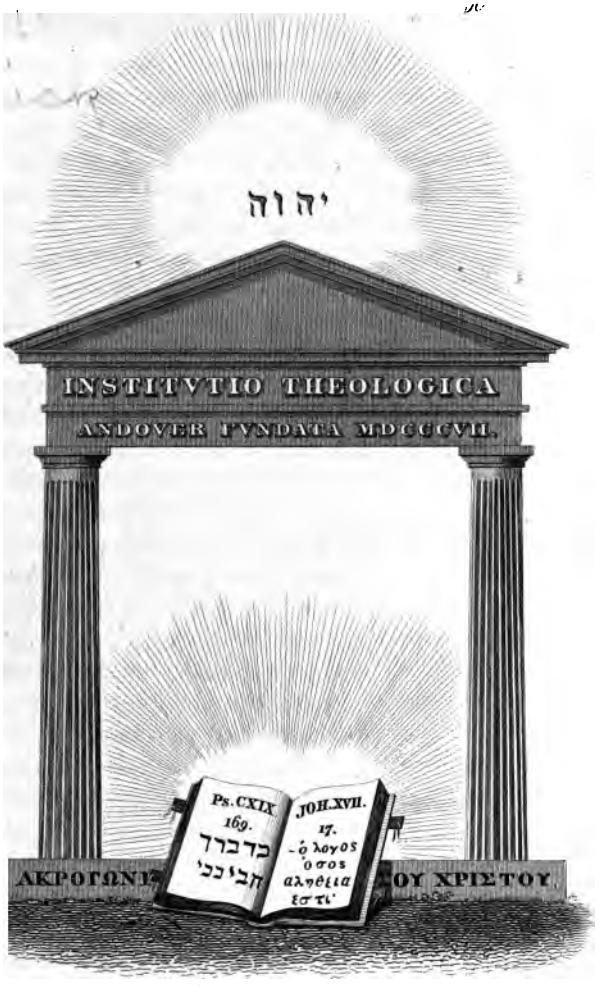
THE WORLDS EPOCH MAKERS

EDITED BY JOHN G. SHEARAT

Wycliffe and the Lollards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THE WORLD'S EPOCH-MAKERS

EDITED BY

OLIPHANT SMEATON

Wycliffe and The Lollards

By J. C. Carrick

THE WORLD'S EPOCH-MAKERS

Wycliffe and The Lollards

By

J. C. Carrick

Author of "The Abbey of S. Mary, Newbottle"
"The Story of the Burning Bush"
"The Story of John Knox and his Land"
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Dedicated to the

Rev. Professor M. C. Taylor, D.D., Edinburgh

Chaplain to the King

With the grateful and affectionate respect

of his old pupil

PREFATORY NOTE

In addition to Professor Taylor, I cannot refrain from expressing my sense of gratitude to and admiration of Wycliffe's successor in the Mastership of Balliol, Mr. Edward Caird, to whom I owe so much; and also to the chief librarians of the British Museum, the Bodleian and Lincoln College Libraries, Oxford, all of whom personally and ungrudgingly aided me in my researches among Wycliffe MSS. in London and Oxford; and also to the late librarians of the Signet Library, Edinburgh, Dr. Law and Mr. Edmond, who spared no pains to help me. To these more especially, but to many others as well, I am indebted more than words can tell for guidance, encouragement, and practical help.

J. C. CARRICK.

CONTENTS

PART I

JOHN WYCLIFFE

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Reformers before the Reformation	1
II.	Wycliffe's Early Surroundings	36
III.	Wycliffe's Student Life	52
IV.	Tiara and Crown	69
V.	Wycliffe's Mission to Bruges	94
VI.	Rector of Lutterworth	99
VII.	The Papal Ban against Wycliffe	105
VIII.	The Friars and the Papacy	113
IX.	Wycliffe's Lollards, Bible and Tracts	132
X.	Wycliffe's Death	144
XI.	Wycliffe and the English Bible	147
XII.	Wycliffe's "Poor Preachers"	166
XIII.	Wycliffe's Theology	177
XIV.	The Character of Wycliffe	191

PART II

THE LOLLARDS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	LOLLARDISM IN ENGLAND	199
II.	LOLLARDISM IN SCOTLAND	253
III.	LOLLARDISM ON THE CONTINENT	283

PART III

RESULTS OF WYCLIFFE'S TEACHING WITHIN THE ROMAN CHURCH 301

WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARDS

PART I

JOHN WYCLIFFE

CHAPTER I

Reformers before the Reformation

Great movements do not come as a rule unheralded. Long before the tempest bursts upon us in all its rage and fury, the fierce drift of the torn clouds and the heavy roll and swell of the ocean billows, as they tumble in shorewards, have given us notice and warning. There are beautiful spring days in February, when the sky is blue and clear and the air is soft and balmy,—weeks before the advent of spring, but of which they are the earnest and the promise. As Dean Alford puts it:

> "Spring should be dressed in emblem quaint and shy;
> A troop of rosy girls escaped from bed,
> For very wantonness of play, should tread
> The garden paths; one tucks her night-robe high
> The dewy freshness of the lawn to try;
> Some have been bolder, and unclothed and bright
> The group is seen in the moon's mellow light;
> Some, scattered, gaze upon the trees and sky.

> But there should be that turn with hurried glance
> Beckoning their playmates, where by a side path
> Between the shrubs, is seen to half-advance
> The moody widow-lodger, who in wrath
> Is sure to scatter all their stealthy play,
> And they will rue it ere the break of day."

Mr. Swinburne's "Vision of Spring in Winter" has the same foundation-idea—"the sweet desire of day before the dawn"; "the morning-song before the stars have fled": and nature and life alike tell their story of early promise, hope and aspiration, long long before the morning of fulfilment has arrived.

Long before an invention has been completed or a great discovery made, there have been hints and premonitions of what is coming. Job's "war-horse" has been cited as the dim promise of the steam-engine; Pantagruel's "frozen words" in Rabelais, of the phonograph; and the "roads that travel" in the same volume, of the "moving platforms" of the Paris Exhibition. Friar Roger Bacon the physicist, before physics became a science, foretold the day when carriages would move without horses and ships traverse the sea without sails. China gave its prophecies and semi-fulfilments of many modern improvements and inventions in the infancy of the human race.

The achievements of modern industry embody the prophetic imaginings and anticipations of the "juventus mundi." Chaucer's "horse of Brass," the Niebelungen Lied's "shoes of swiftness," Jack the giant-killer's "seven-league boots," are foreshadowings of the iron horse, the railway train and the thin iron line of civilisation; Aladdin's ring, by rubbing which he could instantaneously communicate with genii at the ends

of the earth, contains in germ the electric telegraph; the "magic mirror," in which was portrayed the faces and actions of distant friends, is the parent-idea of the reflecting telescope. Science has realised these early dreams. These weird tales were told half in fun, half in earnest. Hidden beneath their grotesque exterior were the sincere anticipations of gifted souls,—whose far-sighted gaze caught the dim outline of the future time.

And so great social, political, and religious movements are generally preceded by lesser movements, of feebler energy, but in the same general direction. The great European Reformation of the sixteenth century did not come upon Christendom like a thunder-clap in a clear sky: there was many a premonitory roll of the thunder, many a big raindrop falling and sheet of wild-fire flashing before the first crash of the storm fell upon Europe. In the Early Church there were those who protested against the attempted supremacy of St. Peter and the Christian community associated with his name and principles. And long after the Roman See had firmly established its hold over Western Christendom — for the East was finally separated and distinct—there were within its borders those who protested against its corruptions, assumptions, and attempted supremacy. Amongst the Reformers before the Reformation may be noted the names of Aerius, Jovinian, Vigilantius, Claude of Turin, Agobard of Lyons, Beringar of Tours, Abelard, Henry of Clugny, Arnold of Brescia, Peter Waldo, Wycliffe, Savonarola, John Huss, and others. In one sense the Franciscan and Dominican friars were reformers, and also several reformed orders of monks, but only in a sense. These

others were all distinct reforming voices heard inside the Church long before the Reformation. In the face of a strong and powerful majority each spoke out for liberty and Scripture truth, and the avoidance of superstition and human inventions. As early, indeed, as the fourth century, when the Western Church was gradually placing human beliefs and ceremonies upon the same level as Scripture truth, Aerius of Pontus lifted up his voice against prayers for the dead, the necessity of fasting, and of Easter celebrations as obligatory, and the supremacy of bishops over presbyters. Anathematised by the Bishop of Constantia, he was still living in the year A.D. 374, and may be regarded as the father of a scriptural reformation; and though accused of being a heretic and of having, as Epiphanius declared, "a foul air spirit," all he fought for was adherence to Scripture and the avoidance of "the commandments of men."

Jovinian, a Roman ascetic (*circa* 390), attacked the monastic life, which many declared to be the life of angels, the superiority of celibacy over the married state, fasting, and righteousness through human works as opposed to Christ's atonement and merits. And yet, though a severe critic of the much-praised life of monk and nun with all their asceticism and self-mortification, he died himself from the personal austerities which he practised.

Vigilantius (*circa* 400 A.D.), the son of an innkeeper at Calagorris at the base of the Pyrenees, said that the monastic system consisted in fleeing from the world instead of bravely fighting it, and that in shutting oneself in behind a cloister wall a man does not necessarily shut out the world,—nay, he shuts a part

of the world in with himself. While the best way of dealing with temptation may be "not fight but flight," Vigilantius held that it was a cowardly thing to retreat from the "good fight of faith" to which Providence had called us. His other reforming views were a condemnation of relics with their supposed miraculous powers, and of prayers for the dead, and generally the mechanical and superstitious forms and acts which were gradually finding a home in the Church of Christ.

There is a deep silence of four hundred years, during which few if any voices are heard lifted up against mechanical and superstitious Christianity, but in the first half of the eighth century, Claude, bishop of Turin, rises up and repeats the views of Vigilantius (*circa* 839 A.D.). Formalism had during these four hundred years of interval made broad strides within the Church. The Eastern or Greek Church had separated from Rome partly on the grounds of opposition to image-worship, although it still held to "icons," —constituting a distinction almost as distinct as the Quakers' objection to "Christian men wearing weapons and serving in the wars," while at the same time permitting the use of clubs which would break every bone in a man's body: while the natural jealousy between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the chief Shepherd of Rome, who even then was claiming to be Head of the Church as St. Peter's successor and Vicar, was responsible for the bulk of the quarrel which divided and divides Christendom into East and West. It may be true that the greatest friend of Truth is Time, her greatest enemy Prejudice, and her constant companion Humility; but history does not throw a very happy light on the humility of either the Eastern

or the Western Patriarchs. "I am sick," cries Gregory of Nazianzen, one of the brightest stars of Eastern Christendom—"of struggling against the jealousies of holy bishops who make harmony impossible, and make light of the interests of the faith in the pursuit of their own quarrels. For this reason I have resolved (as the saying is) to try a new tack, and to gather myself up, as they say the nautilus does when it feels the storm: to gaze from afar at others buffeted and buffeting, intent myself on the peace of heaven" (Epistle 55),—a sentiment almost identical with that of Leighton amid the kindred troubles and controversies of the seventeenth century in Scotland.

The rapidly-growing mechanicalism of the Church raised the protest of one of the prelates of the Church itself, and, as in later ages, the reforming spirit came from within. Claude of Turin lifted up his voice against the adoration of images and crucifixes, which from being in an early age regarded as pictorial lessons in the faith, came to be the objects of worship, the supposed sources of miraculous powers, and, in general, symbolic veils of and obstructions to the full view of Christ Jesus the world's Redeemer. The Frankish Church protested against the growing practice, now in the Roman Church run to its full length; but in spite of all opposition the decision of the Council of Nice of A.D. 783, which allowed "a relative worship" to images of the Saviour and the saints, became the voice of Western Christendom, and the parting of the ways for the Greek Church. An examination of the canons of the seventh œcumenic Synod of Nicæa, with its three hundred and sixty-seven Fathers and twenty-two canons, proves conclusively that a strong party existed

inside the united Church opposed to image-worship and formalism generally. Besides earnestly inculcating the singing of psalms regularly, and simplicity of life in the clergy, together with care as to their amusements and social life generally, while requiring the careful conservation of relics, the Council had a strong minority opposed to the veneration of images and the mechanical use of the crucifix. Along with Claude, Agobard, bishop of Lyons, seems to have contended against image-worship, and in an almost puritanical spirit declaimed against artificial Church music and a mechanical liturgy.

In the north of France in the early years of the same century (*circa* 831), Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of Corbey, finally formulated the doctrine of transubstantiation, although Lanfranc is also claimed as the Schoolman who put the latent tendencies of the Church's belief into definite form. The new dogma was vigorously assailed, notably by Ratramnus, one of the Corbey monks, who, at the request of Charles the Bald, wrote a treatise in opposition to Radbert's dogma. The new dogma was, however, generally accepted by the Western Church, although sporadic objectors appeared for two centuries. Chief among these was Beringar of Tours (*circa* 1025), whose belief was, not transubstantiation, but a form of consubstantiation. In addition to his opposition to the transubstantiation dogma, Beringar declared against formalism and materialism, and appealed to reason and common sense and Scripture,—thus constituting himself a reformer before the Reformation.

To the same class, although in a milder degree, belongs Abelard, whose strange life-tragedy still

commands undying interest. He was an intellectualist, and was before the Reformation what Erasmus was after it. He claimed freedom for the use of his reason, apart from any external authority however supreme. Early in the eleventh century he asserted himself as an independent thinker; and though Anselm was his teacher, and as thorough an apologist for Church dogma and tradition and method as ever lived, his pupil did not follow him, but used his new logical methods to criticise Church doctrine and discipline. Bernard of Clairvaux, whose long dreary poem on the evils of the age, extending to six thousand lines, of which the three well-known hymns, "Jerusalem the Golden," "Brief Life is here our Portion," "The World is very evil," are almost the only portions worth remembering,—who railed against the vices and corruptions of his age in a manner worthy of Carlyle,—was, strange to say, Abelard's keenest opponent, and at the Synod of Sens in 1140 challenged him to open debate. The Council condemned Abelard, and ordered his imprisonment. Having, however, submitted to the ecclesiastical authorities, he escaped confinement and spent the rest of his life as a scholarly recluse. St. Anselm, Abelard's teacher, was the author of *Cur Deus Homo*,—a treatise on the incarnation and atonement of Christ which might have been penned by Luther, so free is it from Roman idiosyncrasies, and often quoted to show the continuity of the atonement doctrine even in the darkest ages of superstition. One special passage is often quoted as an unequivocal testimony to Anselm's belief in justification by faith in Christ alone without works. And yet by a strange irony of fate the prelate who so strongly declared himself as an advocate of

this distinctively Protestant doctrine, and the poet-monk who wailed beside the wall of a ruined Zion over her abuses and wickedness, were the two chief opponents of the man who sought, by a return to reason and simplicity, to restore primitive faith and a pure life. Abelard was, however, a man more of the intellect than of the soul, and the Church was evidently afraid that the right of private judgment and individual opinion would lead to disintegration, disunion, dispeace, and trouble, and above all to disobedience to the fiat of the Vicar of Christ, who even then claimed semi-infallibility. A man of profound religious faith, he was misunderstood and misrepresented. He himself had also sat at the feet of Roscelinus, who opposed the realists and maintained Nominalism, and owed his intellectual position mainly to him. In turn he created quite a school of his own, training indeed, as Guizot has pointed out, no less than one Pope, nineteen cardinals, and more than fifty bishops, French, English, and German, besides a very much larger number of men who, like Arnold of Brescia and others, continued Abelard's fight for intellectual liberty.

The most romantic and at the same time probably the most persistent of the reformers before the Reformation was notably the body known as the Waldenses, which had as its crest a lighted candle surrounded by darkness, and the motto "Lux in tenebris." In all probability the Waldenses and the Albigenses were the same religious communion with different names arising from their different geographical locations. Whether or not the "Israel of the Alps" can date their origin to apostolic days is a sorely vexed subject, but Roman controversialists declare that the movement began with

Peter Waldo (fl. 1160–1170), and in all probability it was he who founded the body and gave it his own name, although a strong argument can be urged on behalf of the derivation of the name from the Alpine "Val."

It is in connection with the Waldenses that the Church of Rome comes out prominently as inimical to popular translations of Scripture; for though they had no desire to quarrel with the Church, and only objected to some of its abuses, more particularly in connection with saints and relics, the Roman See vigorously endeavoured to check Scripture reading and its consequences, with the result that the Swiss prisons of the fourteenth century—the very period when Wycliffe and Wycliffism began to spread and flourish in England—could not contain the multitudes of prisoners, and new dungeons had everywhere to be added, which wanted everything save what was necessary to cause suffering to the captives. In the caverns of Val Louise, hundreds were suffocated by fire: the hillsides and valleys echoed with the groans of those of whom the world was not worthy, and through the ages the Alps were the happy hunting-ground of merciless Popes and their emissaries, until John Milton cried aloud to Europe and to God—"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints," and Oliver Cromwell gathered his army to defend the remnant; and since then the land has had rest.

The Albigenses of France, or "Cathari" as they were called, were practically a portion of the same family of what might be called Scripture-Christians who were still within the fold of, and favourably disposed to, the Church. Their supposed Manichæan origin is a fable of Rome. In all probability their original home was in Macedonia and Bulgaria, and certainly their

vulgar-tongue translation of the Bible was from the Greek text. In the twelfth century they had fairly settled down in Southern France, and made their presence felt. Their beliefs as to Church abuses, relics, saints, Purgatory, prayers for the dead, the "perfecti," their threefold cord of ministry, were almost identical with those of their Waldensian neighbours with whom they shared so many persecutions. The Cathari—the name (*καθαροί*) points to a Greek and Eastern origin —held firmly by the principle of Scripture being the rule of faith and morals, but not "the only rule," as in *The Seven Articles of the Faith* and other authoritative Albigensian treatises, the authority of the Fathers is granted. The fundamental principle of the Reformation was present, both with Waldensians and Albigenses, but there was no idea of separation from the Church, but only a desire to check abuses and remove superstitions. There is no doubt whatever that the Columban missionaries proclaimed the simple gospel of Iona and Lindisfarne in the Alpine Valleys early in the seventh century, and the name of one of them survives still in the nomenclature of one Swiss Canton,—St. Gall,—with its lofty Scheibe, Grisons, and Glarus, the homes of perpetual snow. St. Gall left stormy Iona, and after travelling all over Western Europe finally settled on the banks of the Steinach, then a dense forest full of wolves and bears, and founding an abbey, civilised and christianised all that lofty Alpine district. The fine old cathedral of St. Gall commemorates a Scotsman, and its library contains MSS. of priceless value. It is curious that a missionary from the land of Wycliffe should have preached in the vales of the Waldenses. Whether the Val faith goes back to the days of

Imperial persecution, when Christians fled to the hills to escape the fate of their brothers and sisters in the bloody circus on which St. Peter's in Rome now stands, on ground consecrated by the blood of countless saints or whether to St. Gall and the Celtic Culdees; or whether to Peter Waldo alone, will probably never be known, but a very distinct apostolic and primitive testimony has always come from the Church amid the Alpine snows.

The three great Vaudois strongholds, Val Lucerna, Val Angrogna, and Val Martino are famous in the annals of the struggle for civil and religious liberty. The Pra del Tor, reached only from Angrogna by a wild and almost impassable defile, was the seat of the college where aged pastors instructed candidates for the ministry, and in dark days of persecution was made the refuge of the sick. "The strength of the Hills" was a well-understood Scripture sentence by these Alpine confessors. Although the early Waldensian belief was that the body was the offspring of Waldo, still its apostolic origin has been strenuously claimed, the argument being that during the Imperial persecutions of Rome, refugee Christians betook themselves to the Alps; and thus not only is the Waldensian Church claimed to be the direct descendant of the apostles, but the Roman Church is thereby branded as the original seceder. Certainly the strong spirit of the early Christians has always for centuries characterised this strange people of the hills who have suffered all kinds of martyrdom and abuse, but whose burning bush, like that of Scotland, "was yet not consumed." Their chief divergences from the ordinary teaching of the Roman See were their rejection of image and relic worship, of

the doctrine of Purgatory, of the validity of sacraments even though performed by an immoral priest, of making oaths, and, curiously, of capital punishment. They had their "perfecti" or vowed celibates, who were considered higher in spiritual position than either the "virgins," male and female, or the married,—a class who devoted their lives to contemplation and prayer, not unlike the "men" in the Highlands of Scotland. The chief and outstanding contention, however, of these people as against Rome, was their Scripture reading. The whole or nearly all of the Old and New Testaments was translated into the Provençal or Romaunt, and read by them daily, privately and in families. In 1229 the Pope banned their translation, and did his best to stamp it out as the source of all their heresies; but these simple people hid the word in their heart, where no pontiff could reach it and no spoiler take it out; and societies were formed of young persons who each took a verse to remember perpetually. When it is remembered that the monks calculated that a fair copy of the Bible was for them—with all their literary and artistic appliances—a year's labour, and quick work at that, it seems a marvel how a comparatively unlettered Alpine tribe should have succeeded in translating and disseminating the Bible so widely as they did.

The severities used by the Holy See against Waldenses and Albigenses alike are matters of surest history, and indeed Innocent III. preached a crusade against them, and exhorted the crusaders to use more rigour towards them than towards the Saracens themselves. A full indulgence and exemption from Purgatory were additional attractions to crusaders to

join the ranks of the persecutor. Much of this has been denied by modern Roman controversialists, but apart altogether from facts and historical incidents there can be no mistake as to what Cardinal Bellarmine (*De Laicis*, iii. 22) teaches—

"Heretics are to be destroyed root and branch, *if that can possibly be done.* But if Catholics are so few that they cannot conveniently, with safely, attempt such a thing, *then it is best to be quiet*, lest, upon opposition made by the heretics, the Catholics should be worsted."

Paul v. issued the infamous Bull, *In Cœnâ Domini*, the first article of which anathematises heretics of all sorts, and all who favour them or read their books without permission. Bellarmine proves, at great length, the propriety of putting heretics to death; while another canonist, Van Espen, whose authority stands among the very highest in the Church of Rome, says, in his observations on the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council: "Formerly, indeed, heretics were very rarely punished with death, and Augustine disavowed in his time that this punishment was decreed against heretics. But in later years it everywhere prevailed that obstinate heretics were to be punished with death, nay! and to be burned alive by fire; which kind of punishment signally began in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and, afterwards, it more and more prevailed when the Inquisition was established, in which, to this day, this rigour of punishment is still retained."

Other Roman doctors declare that "heretics are like weeds: *they are quickly to be plucked up—they are quickly to be burned.*" Heretics can be condemned

by the Church to temporal punishments, and even be punished with death." "Heretics may be justly excommunicated, and therefore may be put to death."

Notwithstanding much persecution, however, the reforming movements represented by the Albigenses and Waldenses spread rapidly over Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the vigour of their growth was stimulated by the persecuting attitude and action of the Roman Church. These persecutions were deplored by multitudes within the Church, whose hearts bled to see the Alpine snows reddened and the fair fields of Southern France soaked with faithful blood. Würtz's pictures in the Brussels gallery are tame in comparison with the real scenes which took place among families and communities suspected of heresy. But, like the flowers of their own rocks and fields, they were made hardy by storms; dangers only increased their energy; and as the winds bear the fragrance of flowers far away, so the hurricanes of persecution propagated the faith and spread reforming ideas abroad. The Beghards and the Beguines, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and many other kindred communities, spread their ideas and handed on the torch of apostolic faith. The decision of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to stamp out such divergences of opinion only hastened on the reforming movements, and hurt the Church's credit with the mass of humane people, who daily felt their sympathy with the persecutor waning. Further, the rapid increase of new doctrines, rules, and rites within the Church—developments according to J. H. Newman—made vast masses of people all over Europe quiescent Protestants, believing as they

did that the triumphant and increasing mechanicalism of the Church meant death to true spiritual religion. That their opinion was correct has been proved up to the hilt by the development of Roman dogma since the Reformation, in spite of many improvements in other ways, and a vastly increased activity in the Roman organisation and an enviable distinction for missionary inspiration and success. So calm and forbearing an authority as the late Dr. Littledale, who was far from being an ultra-Protestant, sums up very succinctly the net result of these mechanical forces, against which the long succession of reformers before and after "the great Rebellion" protested either quietly or with trumpet-sound.

"One peculiarity of popular Romanism is, that it is fast ceasing to be a faith, and is degenerating into a mere *superstition*. This word does not mean, as people commonly fancy, over-readiness to swallow marvels. That is *credulity*, about which we are not now concerned. But "superstition" means that form of religion in which *fear* is stronger than love and trust. Its leading characteristic is the belief that the powers above man are unfriendly, jealous, and vindictive, or at best stern and relentless; and that they must be baffled by mechanical amulets and magical charms, or bought off by being gratified with the sight of those sufferings which they delight to inflict. That is the sentiment which is at the root of African Fetishism and of Hindoo Fakirism alike. And now it has got almost entire possession of Romanism. Already it has been shown how the Father and Christ are avoided and shrunk from as stern and pitiless judges, and Mary turned to as the

one merciful hope of sinners; and also how God is supposed to pursue with hideous tortures the souls of even the holy dead. These ghastly distortions of Christianity are not to be found in the Missal at all, and scarcely a trace of them in the Breviary, but they form a very large part, often the larger part, of the popular creed in Roman Catholic countries now."

"Modern Romanism has this in common with atheistic secularism, that *they are both impatient of the unseen and spiritual, and crave after the visible and material. Hence Romans must have human objects of worship instead of God, and must have images of even these; must have amulets instead of belief in providence*; must have a regular tally account with heaven instead of trust in God's love, mercy, and justice. All this not only is not faith, but directly contradicts faith, which is 'the evidence of things *not* seen' (Heb. xi. 1)."

To a very considerable extent the rise of the Dominican and Franciscan orders was a struggle after a freer and less mechanical religion than mediæval Rome allowed to her children. Over and over again the rise of various monastic orders was a reform movement within the Church itself,—such orders as the white-robed Cistercians, and the Bernardines, both offshoots of the Benedictines, as well as the fresh orders of the Carthusians and Carmelites, all of which arose as reform movements towards the close of the eleventh and the commencement of the twelfth centuries. It was a case of the old tree asserting its inner life in fresh expressions of faith, life, worship and service, and new developments of spiritual energy. In 1215 so many such reforming

orders had arisen, that the Pope, Innocent III., fearing so many diversities of practices, forbade any more orders to be created.

The expression of the Church's inner spiritual life could not, however, be kept in, and a new set of orders came into being,—not monastic at all, but free and untrammelled, living on the charity of the people, possessed of no worldly goods, dwelling in the midst of the world and in the very thick of its life, which they shared and moulded, taking no thought for the morrow, observing rules of even stricter personal piety and self-denial than the monastic orders, and bound by the most solemn vows which human beings could take upon them, to plant Christian truth and destroy error, to evangelise the neglected masses in towns and cities, and generally to revive in the world the apostolic life.

The Dominicans—the disciples of that fiery burning spirit which first saw light in Spain in 1170, and which spent itself in severe toils for the Faith—were pre-eminently the defenders of that Faith and the watch-dogs of the Holy See, seeking out and uprooting heresy, so sedulously indeed that the memory of their later Inquisitions is indelibly stained in scarlet in the world's heart. The Franciscans—the followers of that wonderful mystic and spiritual enthusiast St. Francis of Assisi, who was born there, the son of a dealer, in 1182—made their life-aim to give a living manifestation to the world of Christ's poor and suffering life on earth as a rebuke to its pomps and vanities, and so they acted the part of gentle, humble missionaries of the Cross in spreading abroad the knowledge of the Thorn-crowned Cross-bearer.

Both orders in their early career were an invigoration to the spiritual life of Europe, and were very popular, reaching, as they did, through the freedom of their rule of life, the masses of the people, and influencing the neglected communities in town and country in a way which neither the regular clergy nor the monks could accomplish,—a success which eventually raised the bitter jealousy of both of these.

They were absolutely independent of bishops and clergy, and were the Pope's direct servants and missionaries, whose throne and claims they defended in the most exclusive and arbitrary manner. Their very success was the secret of their future decay: becoming wealthy as corporations, they at last became more corrupt even than the monastic orders, and a scandal to Christendom. By his Bull of 1279, "Exiit qui seminat," Pope Nicholas III. enforced on the Franciscans absolute poverty; but having been inserted by Boniface VIII. in the sixth book of his Decretals, and thus made the established law of the Church, it gradually was interpreted to mean—"a moderate use of this world's goods." When this reading of the decretal became general and was acted on, the Franciscan order became at once divided into two camps,—the free-and-easy party, who were content with a moderate or inmoderate use of wealth and goods; and the ascetic, strict, and almost hermit-like party, who insisted on absolute poverty as the first element of a Franciscan friar's life.

Thus the original Franciscan reformation again itself required to be reformed, and the spiritual men of the order raised the cry—"Back to evangelical poverty if our strength and usefulness are to remain

with us." Peter Johannis Olivi, who died in 1298, was the leader of this stricter school of Franciscan friars, many of whom had adopted the hermit-rule of the order of hermits founded by Pope Celestine V.—an order which, though suppressed by Pope Boniface, infused its spirit of evangelical poverty into the Franciscans. The Popes looked with little favour upon men who by their ascetic, spiritual life were a living reproof to the Papal Court with its worldly pomp, licentious and prodigal life, easy-going faith, and dimmed vision of heaven. Olivi's opinions were condemned to a great extent by the Council of Vienne in 1311, and Pope Clement's easy-going interpretation as to the property and use of the Franciscan wealth was reasserted. John XXII. still further oppressed the spiritual Franciscans, and the Dominicans helped him, and brought their Inquisition into action in various districts of France, being backed up by the worldly branch of the Franciscans as well, headed by the general Michael of Cesena. The spirituals declared that there were two Churches—one carnal and worldly, of which the Pope and his cardinals were the head; and the other spiritual and evangelical, which they, the extreme Franciscan friars and others leading a similar life, represented. Thus within the one order of St. Francis there continued to live together under one government two distinct and clearly-marked parties, the strict and the moderate, and these during the latter half of the fourteenth century were called respectively "Observants" and "Conventuals."

The Observants were condemned on 23rd January 1316 by the Bull "Gloriosam Ecclesiam," and in

1321 a fresh turn was given to the Franciscan controversy by the raising of a question of Christian doctrine—quite a new and distinct controversy from the former one with the spirituals—as to whether Christ and the apostles ever held property of any kind. The question previously agitated between Conventuals and Observants was whether the Friars minor or Franciscans ought to have and use wealth and property; the new question, which made a new and fresh cleavage in the order, was this definite theological thesis. Some declared that the Nazarene Carpenter, whose throne was built by Galilæan fishermen, had nothing, and that His apostles left all and followed Him: therefore, they concluded, evangelical poverty must be the law of the Church. At Perugia the whole Franciscan order assembled in 1322, and the dogma of evangelical poverty was formally accepted, the general Michael Cesena adhering to this doctrinal declaration as formerly he had opposed its practical application to the members of the order. Seeing the Franciscans so united as to this doctrine, the Pope accused them of heresy, and the University of Paris and the Dominicans supported the Holy See.

The Franciscans, however, remained firm, aided by William of Ockham, the great English Schoolman. The Pope, however, asserted that "use" and "proprietorship" were inseparable, and annulled Nicholas III.'s Bull. After accusing the Pope of heresy, the Franciscans at last expressed their allegiance to the Pope, except the Fraticelli, who threw in their lot, along with other Franciscans, with Lewis of Bavaria, the German King, and strove for a freer and a better

life. Lewis had in 1324 been excommunicated by the Pope, but the German people remained true to their King, and accordingly an expedition was formed to Rome, and Lewis was crowned by two excommunicated bishops. Lewis' chief friend in these negotiations was Marsiglio dei Raimondini, a teacher in the University of Paris, and he and his Franciscan allies pressed Lewis forward in his attack on John XXII. At the same time, an Anti-pope, Friar Peter of Corvare, was chosen, and Marsiglio was made Papal-vicar of Rome. But Lewis could not continue and his enterprise collapsed, he himself retiring to Pisa along with William of Ockham and Michael of Cesena. The Anti-pope submitted in 1330, and Lewis was in Bavaria in the spring of the year a defeated man. Lewis was excommunicated; and though he often made offers of humiliation and obedience, he remained excommunicated by Pope Clement VI. until his death in 1347.

Lewis' two helpers were the two masters of Paris, Marsiglio of Padua and William Ockham, and their writings show the trend of liberal thought in the Church. The "Defensor Pacis," written by Marsiglio while at the University of Paris, in 1324, arrived at a peace between the spiritual and the civil powers. Dante, in his *De Monarchia* a few years later, sought to obtain universal peace by making a universal State under one ruler. Marsiglio sought to make peace by having a temporal and spiritual estate clearly defined,—the King and the spiritual ruler having their distinct functions and spheres. Marsiglio defined the Church as the whole body of Christian men, laymen and clerks alike,—"the whole community of the

Faithful." Religious toleration was part of his principle, and temporal pains and penalties do not belong to the gospel. Heresy is to be punished in the world to come, not in this.

"Bishop" and "priest," according to Marsiglio, are synonymous, and the office of the Pope is a historical one, arising out of the position of Rome as capital of the Empire. The supreme power of the Church is in the Church itself, and the Pope has no power of supreme judgment in either spiritual or temporal things. Excommunication is the right of the community of Christians alone, not of the Pope. The sole power and privilege of the clergy is in their spiritual character, and temporal power is theirs only in as much as they deserve to wield it. Marsiglio was an ally of the Fraticelli, and declared that the ministers of the Church should be supported by the people, but no priest is entitled to tithes; and if he requires more than is given him, he should, like the apostles, support himself with the work of his own hands. The clergy are a spiritual order, and "evangelical poverty" is a mark of their office. William of Ockham, a Franciscan friar born in England, but who spent most of his life on the Continent, was the other speculative intellect who united with Marsiglio in the reforming work. He denied that the Pope was a spiritual autocrat, and indeed asserted that in some respects the Emperor—the State—was his judge. Popes are fallible, he declared, and so are general councils, and the assembly of the faithful should be constituted both of clergy and laity, men and women. He seems to go to Scripture as his final authority; but the Pope is the exponent of the whole Church, though appeal is always

open to the Church, the whole society of Christian believers. Marsiglio is certain as to this final arbiter, while Ockham hesitates.

William of Ockham was a thorough scholasticist, and was the real father of Wycliffe. He advocated an immediate return to evangelical poverty, and both he and Marsiglio were in essence Socialists. When Gregory XI., in taking his first cognisance of the views of John Wycliffe, declared that they contained the doctrine of "Defensor Pacis," "doctrinam indoctam damnatæ memoriæ Marsilii de Padua," he only stated what was the fact, that Marsiglio de Padua, along with John of Jandun his collaborateur, and William of Ockham, were the orginators of that doctrine which found its expression in Wycliffe, and finally its triumphant assertion in the Reformation of Europe.

Previous to Wycliffe's reforming movement, there had been in England several strong efforts, both civil and religious, in the same direction. From the hour that King John made over England as the property of the Pope, the national spirit—of nobles and people alike—became changed. In Magna Charta, which laid down a clear statement of the liberty of the nation and of the subject, the papal claim to England is ignored: and King John himself in his letter to the Pope declares that the revolt of the earls and barons was caused by his own act of submission to the Holy See. From the start of the thirteenth century, besides, the Saxon element in the nation began to assert itself as against the Norman influence, and English national feeling became every day more consolidated. In 1231 there was even a secret alliance between nobles and priests which demanded that the chapters

of cathedrals and abbeys should refuse to pay taxes to Rome. Not only priests, but a prelate, even a cardinal—the papal legate Otho, were menaced for doing so. It was in 1240 that Cardinal Otho had to face an insurrection of Oxford students who evinced strong feeling against Roman imposts; while in a letter to Gregory IX. the nobles protested against the violation of their rights of ecclesiastical patronage, and prelates at various times complained to papal legates, and even directly to the Pope, against the usurpations and oppressions of the Holy See.

Of those who, inside the Church, made this anti-papal stand, Robert Grossetête, bishop of Lincoln, was one of the most outstanding. Wycliffe reverenced his name, not only as a scholar "who was in possession of all the sciences," as a saint who never took a step save after an arduous wrestle with his conscience, but as a patriot who desired England's well-being and peace. He introduced many measures of reform,—the better observance of Sundays, holy days and festivals, personal visitation of monasteries, and the improvement of cathedral Chapters. His whole life was a series of conflicts with wrong-doing and wrong-doers, and his great aim was to preserve in all things a good conscience. He preached regularly in his diocesan visitations to the clergy, and urged them to do the same to their parishioners. He earnestly laboured for the moral and religious elevation of the pastoral office, and exercised much discrimination in selecting and preparing them for the holy ministry.

He favoured the friars, who were then filled with the zeal and enthusiasm of a first love, and often declared that the glory of God and the salvation of

souls was the great end which the ministry, whether parochial or mendicant, ought to have in view.

In a personal audience he submitted to the Pope at Lyons a Memorial regarding the appropriation of Church lands by monasteries, knightly orders, and others, thus impoverishing the local livings of the clergy, with the result that in many cases priests were unable financially to reside amongst their people, the charge being attended to by some outsider, priest or monk, commissioned and paid by monastery or knight commander. Through his influence all such appointments were declared null and void. By a system of exemptions, however, obtained directly from the corrupt Court at Rome, the reform did not come off to any considerable extent. Though well-stricken in years, Grossetête, not to be outwitted, hastened to Lyons, where Innocent III. was still residing in 1250, and, though coolly received, pressed his reforms. This appeal to the head of the Church is a frank statement of what the Lincoln prelate believed to be the causes of the Church's decadence,—evil-living priests who do not preach the gospel, pride and avarice in Churchmen, and a poor example set generally by those in authority. The root-cause of all these evils lies, said the intrepid bishop, in the Curia itself. "He who commits the care of a flock to a man in order that the latter may get the milk and wool while he is unable or unwilling to guide, to feed and protect the flock, such an one gives over the flock itself to death as a prey." The making over of parish churches to monasteries and other bodies, he insisted, could only result in the neglect of the flock; for "the cure of souls consists not only in the dispensation of the sacraments, in singing

of 'hours' and reading of Masses, but in the true teaching of the word of life, in rebuking and correcting vice; and besides all this, in feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, lodging the strangers, visiting the sick and the prisoners,—especially among the parish priest's own parishioners,—in order, by such deeds of charity, to instruct the people in the holy exercises of active life: and to do such deeds is not at all in the power of these middlemen, for they get so small a portion of the Church's goods that they have scarcely enough to live upon."

This plain speaking was by no means acceptable at the papal Court, and Grossetête was so downcast at the result of his advocacy of reform that he meditated resigning his See. But reviving, he recommenced his practical episcopate, endeavouring to revive religious life in the priesthood and the people of his diocese.

In 1252, he, after frequently addressing Parliament, addressed a letter to the nobility and people of England, complaining of the encroachments of the Roman Curia, which resulted in the land being drained of its wealth. The very year of his death witnessed him engaged in a direct conflict with the Pope on this very subject. Innocent IV. gave his grandson, Frederick of Lavagna, a canonry in Lincoln Cathedral. Instantly Grossetête resented the intrusion of a foreigner into an English cathedral Chapter, even though a nephew of Christ's Vicar. The Pope in making the appointment had ignored the bishop and addressed the Dean and Magister Innocent, the papal agent in England; accordingly Grossetête addressed them and not the Pope, and declared the appointment to be a sin against God. The installation was delayed:

Pope Innocent was in a frenzy of passion; but the cardinals rather favoured Grossetête, declaring that he was in the right, and was, besides, a man of such personal piety and weight that opposition might be dangerous. Matthew Paris in his *History of Great Britain* gives a glowing account of the panegyrics which were spoken on Grossetête by the cardinals. He was annoyed no more, and remained at Lincoln till his death, shepherding the priests and the people with anxious care. He died on 9th October 1253, and was buried in his beautiful minster, with its three great majestic towers rising above him as guardian angels. It was even said that on the night he died strange beautiful music was heard being wafted across the sweet fen lands with their autumn tints and soft-flowing streams. Fifty years after his death, so reverenced was his memory, that a proposal was made for his canonisation by the King, the University of Oxford, and the Chapter of St. Paul's; but Grossetête had been too frank and free in his addresses to the Vicar of Christ to be thus honoured. All England, however, regarded him as a saint, and no one reverenced his saintly character and zeal for the gospel more than Wycliffe. The common people spoke of him as "St. Robert," and his influence as a reforming force inside the Church never really died out. At the Council of Constance in 1415, which ordered Wycliffe's body to be exhumed and burned, Henry Abendon, the Oxford divine, referred to him often as a great Christian force in England. From the cloisters of Lincoln Cathedral, overlooking the flat rich lands watered by the Trent, the Witham, the Welland, and the Ancholme, came forth an influence which purified

and ennobled all the diocese, and was wafted like a sweet incense over England, to its spiritual refreshment and growth in grace,—an influence which, as at Bedford with Bunyan, is still felt, and has drawn forth into the fulness of life many great and saintly bishops and scholars, none more so than Bishop Wordsworth and Bishop King, whose scholarship, devotion, and piety have kept up the old tradition, while the latter's noble and intrepid stand for spiritual independence raised him to a great position in the estimation of all who have a respect for Christian consistency and courage. Even in old age the flourish is there still.

Henry Bracton, the first English lawyer in the Middle Ages, was another reforming spirit in England who sought to define the rights of the Church, more especially in the matter of patronage. Grossetête had only been dead a few years, when questions arose between the barons and the Church as to property, patronage, and ministry. The Pope professed to be the head of the Scottish Church, and declined to allow Edward I. to interfere with his rights there. In 1301 the English nobles replied to Boniface VIII. that the kingdom of Scotland was not a fief of the Pope but of the English Crown, and declined to allow the Pope to intervene in the struggle between England and Scotland. Edward addressed a long letter to Boniface claiming the Scottish crown, and refusing and protesting against the Pope's power to interfere. In all these struggles against the presumption and pretensions of the Roman Curia, Henry Bracton had a large place, and served the national cause ably and well.

Meanwhile English national and patriotic feeling

was steadily growing. The Pope's "Provisions" for foreign clergy in England were persistently barred. Clement VI. gave to his two new cardinals "provisions" to wealthy English dignities, and in 1343 Parliament addressed the Pope and declared them null and void. Both the statutes of "Provisors" and of "Præmunire" struck at the arrogant papal claims.

But there was one strong personality who, not only from his character but from his position, had some influence in the national and reforming life of England —Archbishop Richard of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, to whom as to Grossetête Wycliffe frequently refers. Richard Fitzralph studied in Oxford, and was a strong opponent of the Mendicant orders. After being Chancellor of Oxford University, he became Archbishop of Armagh in 1347. He was a learned divine and a strenuous controversialist, and in some English sermons preached in St. Paul's Cathedral in London he declared against mendicancy, and urged the duty of confessing not to wandering friars and monks, but to the parish priest. He blames the insidious and undermining efforts of the friars, and urges them to return to primitive simplicity. Since the days of Grossetête, who had favoured the preaching friars, the Franciscan and Dominican orders had been pampered by the Church, and had grown rich, idle, avaricious, and corrupt. Hence Fitzralph's tirade against them. Fitzralph's discourse produced a reply from Roger Conway, an Oxford Franciscan doctor, who on grounds of Church law and scholastic reasoning defends his order to little purpose. In 1356, Fitzralph published his *Last Age of the Church*, in which he declaims against the sins of the clergy and the simony which

was so universal. Fitzralph, however, was a narrow beholder of his age, and being attached to that portion of the Franciscan order known as Joachimists and to the Apocalyptic views of the "Eternal Gospel," he only attacked what was suitable to himself, and did not take a large and full view of the state of the Church. His reforming sentiments touched only a very small sphere, and had comparatively little effect.

Thomas Bradwardine—"Doctor Profundus" as his age loved to call him—had a very different influence both as to extent and power, and undoubtedly his teachings had a direct influence upon Wycliffe. While a student at Merton College he professed to undergo a spiritual awakening, and, like Luther, found in the Epistle to the Romans guidance to his soul in the matter of peace with God. He believed and taught that only the grace of God received by and working in the heart can produce the fruits of the Spirit. He accompanied Edward III. into France as war-chaplain and confessor, and exercised a great influence both upon the Sovereign and the army, so much so that the English victories were ascribed more to Bradwardine's prayers than to Edward's valour.

In 1348 he was nominated Archbishop of Canterbury by the Chapter, but the King would not suffer him to leave his person. In the following year he was again nominated and the King consented, and Thomas de Bradwardine was consecrated in Avignon on July 1349, being nominated archbishop by both King and Pope. A week or two later, on 26th August 1349, he passed away, at Lambeth Palace. His great systematic work, *Causa Dei*, or "The Cause of God," has as its main feature the discomfiture of Pelagianism and the

glorification of God's free grace in the salvation of sinners. In a deep philosophical spirit he proves the sovereign power of God's free grace, supported by Scripture and the early Fathers. There is no such thing as merit: salvation is of God's grace alone. He clung tenaciously to the doctrines of the Church, but threw himself upon God to defend him in the position he had taken up, founded on St. Paul's words, "By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

The same cry for the free grace of God which found its doctrinal and philosophical expression and exposition in Bradwardine's writings had popular voice given to it in the famous "Vision of Piers Plowman," a great popular poem which gathers up the hopes and aspirations of the age. It appeared twelve years after the archbishop's death; and while written evidently by a man of learning, he appeals to the heart and soul of the English people. The Bible is frequently quoted in its Vulgate form, as well as the classics and the Fathers; and tradition ascribes the poem to a monk named Richard Longland of the Benedictine Priory of Great Malvern, Worcestershire. The verses reflect the scenery of the Malvern hills, and the life of the simple agriculturists of the district. At once, as if by magic, Piers Plowman became the type to the district, and finally to all England, of a simple soul searching for the light, anxious to be free of superstitions and abuses, and with a spirit on fire for higher things. In the homely language of the people he passes from vision to vision, and like Bunyan dreams his dreams. The vices of the Church, the deadness of the ministry, are all brought to light. Reason and conscience preach

their sermons, and in striking allegory the beauty of holiness is portrayed. With bitter satire the worldliness of the clergy is described, and the day of reform and amendment hailed with joy. These ten visions throw more light on the state of religion in England, and on the aspirations of many in the land who were not hopelessly benighted or ecclesiastically tongue-tied, than any other written documents of the period. The aspiration of England is represented to be that of the dying Göthe—"More light, more light."

It was long before the reforming movement took a distinct form: for centuries there were only mutterings and murmurings and mild protests. The idea of separation from the Church was abhorrent, but the abuses inside the Church vexed all good and pious souls. The same hesitation has characterised many in our own time, who, admiring the Roman Church for many things, deplore, like Père Hyacinth and the Old Catholics, the wrong-doings of the mother: and many a pious soul, driven by the Euroclydon of contending sects and beliefs on to the Italian shore, has found there on the beach plenty of stinking fish and unsavoury carcases. The blue-eyed neophyte of the famous picture either leaves the house to remain religious, or degenerates into one of the fat, red-nosed, worldly schemers who occupy the stalls beside him.

The danger of the position has all along lain in the infallible claims and exclusive and solitary position demanded by the Roman See. "Religious liberty," wrote a leading Roman Catholic theologian in the *Rambler* (Sept. 1851)—"in the sense of a liberty possessed by every man to choose his own religion, is one of the most wicked delusions ever foisted on this age by the father

of deceit. The very name of liberty—except in the sense of a permission to do certain definite acts—ought to be banished from the domain of religion. It is neither more nor less than a falsehood. No man has a right to choose his religion. None but an atheist can uphold the principles of religious liberty. Shall I therefore fall in with this abominable delusion? Shall I foster that damnable doctrine that Socinianism and Calvinism and Anglicanism and Judaism are not every one of them mortal sins like murder and adultery? Shall I hold out hopes to my erring Protestant brother that I shall not meddle with his creed if he will not meddle with mine? Shall I tempt him to forget that he has no more right to his religious views than he has to my purse or to my house or my life-blood? No! Catholicism is the most intolerant of creeds. It is intolerance itself, for it is the truth itself."

Multitudes of official utterances from the Roman chair might be given in proof of the claim advanced by Roman Catholics that "Rome has spoken, therefore it is,"—"Ubi Petrus est ibi Christus." Manning's favourite maxim was—"To the 'vox populi' of the day we reply with the 'vox Petri.'" But Pius VII. put the matter for once and for all very clearly when he wrote his encyclical of 5th February 1808:

"It is proposed that all religious persons should be free, and their worship publicly exercised; but we have rejected this article as contrary to the Canons, to the Councils, to the Catholic Religion, and to the tranquillity of human life.

"Out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation. The French system of indifference or equality with

regard to all religions is utterly opposite to the Catholic Faith, which, being the only one of divine institution, cannot form any alliance with any other any more than Christ can league with Belial. It is false that the Concordat has recognised and established the independence of the Church of France, or that it has given a sanction to the toleration of other modes of worship."

CHAPTER II

Wycliffe's Early Surroundings

Although the Roman system had in Wycliffe's boyhood overspread all England and Scotland too, the memory of the earlier ecclesiastical rule had by no means died out. Aidan, Cuthbert, Bede, Ninian, Columba, Kentigern,—these were the names associated in the minds of the people generally with the Faith of Christ and its diffusion over the land.

That early Columban Church which lit a fire on each side of the island, one at Iona and the other at Lindisfarne, as if in token that the intervening lands were theirs for Christ, was indeed a magnificent example of obedience to the Master's "marching-orders." St. Columba among the Picts of Scotland did what his predecessors had accomplished in Ireland. Columbanus —an ardent, earnest apostolic soul, went forth to France and Switzerland along with his friend St. Gall, the latter of whom spread the gospel among the Alps, and was possibly the originator of that primitive form of Christianity of which the Waldenses were the later exponents. Columbanus having settled schools and churches in the Vosges, advanced to Lombardy. Amongst the Apennines, Agilulf declared his message almost within sight of Rome, to which he owed no allegiance, and founded the convent of Bobbio. In

Bavaria, Clement with his disciples Sampson and Virgilius spread the Columban gospel; the latter penetrated even into Carinthia, and eventually became bishop of Salzburg. John Scotus Erigena succeeded these great evangelists, and settled at Charles the Bald's Court. Claude Clement, known as Claude of Turin, was also of the same missionary army, labouring all around the city which has given him its name, afterwards founding the University of Paris, as John Scott, surnamed Albinus, founded the University of Pavia. In North Italy these Culdee missionaries had another representative in Sedulius, afterwards Bishop of Oreta in Spain, as Donatus similarly became bishop of the Italian Fiesole. The Cisalpine valleys were the home of the Culdee missionaries, who did much to give them that primitive faith from which all-powerful Rome could never shake them.

Penetrating even to Iceland and Greenland, St. Brendan and St. Cormac planted the Cross, while St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert from Lindisfarne set themselves to conquer Northumbria for the Cross.

That Columban or Culdee Christianity was what the Roman Church displaced, and it was what Wycliffe wished revived again. A few words regarding the methods of these primitive Culdees who preceded the Roman clergy in Scotland and North England seem necessary.

The abbot of each Culdee establishment exercised episcopal superintendence not only over his own monks, but over the whole district stretching for so many miles like a girth round their church. It is, however, quite an anachronism to project the modern bishop into Culdee times, for Church polity was then

crude and unformed. The one aim of these men was not to elaborate a perfect system of Church government, but to gather in something to govern. All other questions were secondary to this—how to bring entire Scotland in touch with the Cross. Towards the close of this period the brethren of a community formally elected a bishop for themselves and their district, until the Crown, influenced by Rome, stepped in and deprived them of this privilege.

The day of a Culdee missionary opened and closed before the altar of heaven. The ancient ritual of Iona, which the Culdees clung to with loving tenacity, pretty much as England clung to the "Sarum use" for long after Rome had become dominant,—consisted of prayers, praise, and short extracts from the Gospels: the Roman writers speak of their "barbarous rites" and "special use,"—pointing at the simplicity of their rites. Very probably the "Hymn of St. Columba"—which the Celtic clergy loved so much, that they said their Master had it handed down to him from heaven by one of the white-robed—formed a frequent act in their common worship. It begins with praise of God and His works: it then describes the angelic world, the material creation, the stars and their motions, and then with a sublime beauty passes to the description of the future state—the glories of heaven, and the Paradise of God; concluding with an impressive picture of the Last Day which will bear some comparison with the "Dies Iræ."

The worship done, and the solemn blessing over,—given by the grey-haired abbot to the kneeling brethren,—the Culdee Fathers sallied forth in twos to preach and teach the people around them. In misty moor and gloomy Caledonian glen,—in the little

Pictish towns and by the shore of the restless sea—these heralds of Christ were to be seen and heard. They were not unlike the old Druidical priests either in appearance or in their solitary manner of life: their hermit spirits roamed and dwelt apart. Their language would glow with Celtic fervour as they discoursed to the little circle of Picts gathered round them, of death, judgment, heaven, hell, God's power, and Christ's salvation. There is a very strong resemblance between Ossian's poetry and St. Columba's hymn. Doubtless the same picturesque glowing imagery characterised their preaching. Strong in their convictions, brave in their endeavours, constant in their aim, unflinching in their self-denial, they cared not to whom they spoke of Christ and the Cross. They preached even in the Court, and brought kings not only to worship at the feet of the King of kings, like the wise men of the East, but like them to offer gifts.

Indeed, the North of England and Scotland went hand in hand in religious matters, were converted and christianised mainly by the same missionaries, and as a matter of fact were for long, even after the Roman rule triumphed, ecclesiastically one. The bishops of Scotland were until the year 1472 under the primacy of the Archbishop of York, which explains very vividly the uneven division of England into the two Archdioceses of Canterbury and York,—the latter having been shorn of half its domain by the erection of St. Andrews in 1472 into a metropolitan See independent of York, thus finally severing the Scottish Church from the English. Hence to-day the Canterbury prelate is "primate of all England," whereas the distinguished Scotsman who to-day adorns the See of

Eboracum is only "primate of England"—a title pointing to the loss of his pristine designation subjoined to his Anglican honours—"primate of Scotland." In a word, the island was formerly ecclesiastically halved between the two English archbishops. It is true Pope Clement III. made the ten Scottish Sees immediately dependent on the Pope. "Scotland was from earliest times," said Leo XIII. in his Encyclical re-establishing the Roman hierarchy in Scotland (in shadow and in name, at any rate), "the special daughter of the Roman See." Pope Gregory had allotted twelve suffragans to the northern Church under the supremacy of the See of York. Hungus in vain designed St. Andrews to be the mother Church and See of Pictland, —the home of St. Rule and the resting-place of St. Andrew's bones. In 1125 the bishop sought the pallium from Rome, and devised the complete severance of the Scottish Church from any dependence upon York; but the jealousies of the other Scottish bishops destroyed the scheme, and deferred the erection of St. Andrews into the metropolitan See of Scotland until the year 1472, when, on the petition of James III. and the representative of Bishop Patrick Graham, that owing to the wars around the borders and the dangers attending a journey through the warlike tribes on both sides of the Cheviots to the south, Scottish clergy could not appeal in person to the Archbishop of York; accordingly Pope Sixtus IV., on 25th August 1472, in the teeth of the entreaties and protests of the Archbishops of York and Drontheim and the bribe of 10,000 marks to the King if he would abandon the scheme, raised the See of St. Andrews into an archbishopric and its occupant metropolitan of all Scotland,—a position

which was enjoyed by him until Glasgow asked the same honour and privilege, which were acquired only after a very stiff fight lasting more than a generation. The intervention of the Archbishop of Drontheim was due to the fact that the Orkney and Shetland Islands were ecclesiastically under the Norwegian Church, not under the Scottish or the English.

The primitive Christianity and Christian Church of Scotland and northern England were ousted by Rome only after prolonged struggle and sustained opposition. The Whitby conference of A.D. 664, to settle the dispute between the English and Scottish clergy as to the date of Easter and the form of the tonsure, when St. Colman and his friends, following the Columban methods, were opposed by Wilfred and King Oswi, terminated the discussion by declaring that he preferred St. Peter to St. Columba and Rome to Iona, and when St. Chad, bishop of the East Saxons, fell in with the Roman rule, that conference did not close the debate. It was more than a debate: it was a cleavage between two separate forms of Christianity — the Roman and the primitive Columban or British. In 669, Theodore of Tarsus was appointed to the See of Canterbury on the recommendation of Vitalian, bishop of Rome, and all the Saxon prelates accepted him and the Roman rules and discipline. Bede says he was the first archbishop whom all the English Church obeyed. Through the efforts of Theodore and Adrian, the learned African who accompanied him from Rome, and whom William of Malmesbury described as "a fountain of letters and a river of arts," all England, with its seventeen dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London, Dummock (East Angles), Helmer (ditto),

Winchester, Sherburn (West Angles), Lichfield, Leicester, Lindsey, Worcester and Hereford (Mercia), Selsey (South Saxon), York, Lindisfarne, Hexham, and Whithorn (Northumbria), became Roman, and the British Church was to be found scattered over England in fragments, sporadic cases of persons and communities who preferred the Columban rites to the intruded Roman ones. Wales remained non-Roman so long as she held her national independence. In 755, Elford, bishop of Bangor, adopted the Roman Easter use, but the Bishop of South Wales declined to comply. In the middle of the ninth century, as is narrated in a Greek *Life of St. Chrysostom*, quoted by Usher in his *Discourse of the Religion of the Irish and British*, "certain clergymen who dwelt in the isles of the ocean repaired to Constantinople to inquire of certain ecclesiastical traditions and the perfect and exact computation of Easter," thus proving that the Easter dispute had not been laid to rest even in the ninth century. At last Wales was conquered by Henry I., and Bernard a Norman was made suffragan and bishop of St. David's, and the entire Cambrian Church came under the jurisdiction of Canterbury as Canterbury had come under that of Rome. The Scottish Church did not succumb to Roman influence until the eleventh century, when the Princess Margaret, who married Malcolm Canmore, king of Scots, brought Roman clergy and practices with her which in time, through royal influences and the lethargy of the Culdee Church, triumphed over the native Columban establishment.

Not, indeed, that the voice of the protestor was silenced by that triumph either in England, Wales, or

Scotland. All the old British and Columban practices were gradually ousted in favour of Roman plain-chants and ritual and practices. So late as 1240 a protest was made by Ælfred (*Spec. Char.* ii. 20) against ritualism and ceremonialism, and this although he was a dutiful minister of religion. Simon Taylor, a Dominican friar of Dunblane educated in France, returned to Scotland and reformed the entire musical service, vocal and instrumental, of the Church of his native land. Organs were gradually introduced, even though the opposition in Scotland against the "kist o' whistles" was as marked then as in a post-Reformation era. Ælfred, looking out upon the rapidly-advancing tide of innovation, cries out in distress: "Since all types and figures are now ceased, why so many organs and cymbals in our churches? why, I say, that terrible blowing of bellows that rather imitates the frightsomeness of thunder than the sweet harmony of the voice? One restrains his breath, another breathes his breath, and a third unaccountably dilates his voice, and sometimes, which I am ashamed to say, they fall a-quivering like the neighing of horses. Then they lay down their manly vigour, and with their voices endeavour to imitate the softness of women; then by an artificial circumvolution they have a variety of outrunnings. Sometimes you shall see them with open mouths and their breath restrained as if they were expiring and not singing; and by a ridiculous interruption of their breath seem as if they were altogether silent. At other times they appear like persons in the agonies of death; then with a variety of gestures they personate comedians,—their lips are contracted, their eyes roll, their shoulders are

moved upwards and downwards, their fingers move and dance to every motion: and this ridiculous behaviour is called religion; and where these things are most frequently done there God is said to be more honourably worshipped."

This protest against an increasing and arrogant ceremonialism was made only about three-quarters of a century before Wycliffe's birth. There were many, both in England, Scotland, and Wales, who quietly protested against much of the new Roman way, but the protests became feebler and fewer until the era of the Renaissance and Reformation began to dawn. And doubtless the sacred memories and associations of the great Northumbrian Church,—holy Lindisfarne with its missionary fires,—sacred Jarrow with its discovered and disclosed gospel,—Durham with its memories of St. Cuthbert, who led the North like a little child to the Cross, and who lies beneath the altar of the cathedral as Bede lies underneath the galilee,—one at the east and one at the west of the stately minster as if to show that the Scripture and the altar are both needed to a complete life and being,—all these and many more were the atmosphere breathed by young Wycliffe at Spresswell and Egglestone.

In 1827, in order to satisfy a general and natural interest and curiosity, St. Cuthbert's tomb in Durham Cathedral was opened and the coffin-lid removed, when his remains were found in a wonderful state of preservation. A small Greek cross on his breast was taken out, and, along with an ivory comb and some embroidered vestments, were placed in the library of the Cathedral by the Dean and Chapter. What

happened to his body happened likewise to his spirit and influence, which lived on through the years, and was quick and powerful in the North in Wycliffe's day: and what Wycliffe did was spiritually very much what was done five hundred years later by the Durham Chapter literally,—he took the cross out of its hiding and brought it out into the light, from out of the graveclothes of ceremonialism and the decay of a human system. At any rate, he is the direct successor of those who rejected the mechanicalism of Rome and thirsted for a pure, primitive, and active Church, with an open Scripture as Bede gave it, and a simple but beautiful gospel as Cuthbert preached it. The Roman Church after its conquest over the British and Columban Church ostentatiously declared that it alone enjoyed an unbroken descent from Christ's apostles; to which the acid writer of to-day replies: "Yes, it is a descent from them, and a very great one." The Evangelical succession, however, never failed, though it may have remained very quiescent and unexpressed for two hundred years. It could not be otherwise but that John Wycliffe was inspired by the memories of the great heroes of the Northumbrian Church who preached Christ in His fulness, power, and presence, and changed the heathen tribes of the North into civilisation and piety. In a word, John Wycliffe may be claimed as the resurrection of an older faith than Rome,—a resurrection which in time proved triumphantly victorious; and after all the old system triumphed, though after many days and manifold vicissitudes.

There can be little doubt that the earliest Reformers within the Church directed their attacks not so much

against any of the Church's doctrines, as against the abuses and corruptions which had grown up within the great organisation in which they had been reared. The later Reformers, such as Luther, Calvin, and Knox, assailed the entire papal system root and branch, but the earlier reformers attacked only the corruptions of a system which they naturally accepted as right and true.

By way of contrast between the earlier and later reformers, take the Scottish Reformation of 1549–1560, as contrasted with the earlier movements towards reform.

For several centuries after the introduction of the Roman rule which ousted the Culdee, the Church of Scotland was vigorous, active, and useful. And then decay set in, as all over Europe. The philosophy of the Schoolmen, with its mechanical modes of thinking, crippled intelligence and checked inquiry; superstitions and unscriptural articles were added to the Church's creed; the religious orders and the parish priests, with notable exceptions, became worldly, careless, and unspiritual. The abbacies and other lucrative posts in the Church were presented often to Court favourites, non-ordained persons who had had no religious training or qualifications. Sometimes even a child was made abbot to draw the revenues: the people associated the Church with greed, deceit, and even with gross vice in its highest places; the Church itself acknowledged its degradation, but confessed to its powerlessness to reform matters; and, finally, the crash, long foreseen, came, and another Reformation was seen to be a necessity. As the Roman ousted the Culdee Church, so now the Roman Church was to be ousted by the Reformed, and

the chief instrument in this great national movement was John Knox, who shares with Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns the honour of being included in the trinity of the three greatest Scotsmen.

The good and able men within the Church knew and deplored the countless evils which were condoned; but the ecclesiastical body was tied hand and foot. On the eve of the Reformation a council was held—in 1549—for the purpose of reforming abuses; but, as Lord Hailes says, "when a house is in flames it is vain to draw up regulations for the bridling of joists or the sweeping of chimneys." The canons of this council recommended that a reader in theology should be in every cathedral, church, and monastery; that students should be more carefully educated: that marriage registers should be instituted in every parish; and that such regulations should be made as would remove the suspicion that at death the estates of many persons fall unjustly into the hands of the clergy. In 1551, Archbishop Hamilton published a *Catechism*, in the vulgar tongue, for the instruction of the people, and other means were used to stem the tide of inevitable Reformation. But it was too late, and the hand pointed to the hour and the clock struck. The Scottish Reformation came mainly from within the Church itself,—from priests and people who were weary of the mechanicalism, and worse, of the Church's methods, and who sighed after a brighter day of spiritual liberty, aspiration, and hope. The reforming movement was strengthened by the blindness of the Roman Church itself, which foolishly sought by persecution and death to crush the upward movement. But the hour had come, and a new development of religion in Scotland

was clearly a necessity: the soul of the nation cried out for a more spiritual religion, a purer Church, and an intellectual awakening.

The spirit of Scotland on the eve of the Reformation is well represented by Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, who in his *Satires* dwelt upon the state of religion in the land. In "Kittie's Confession" he sums up the teaching of the average priest of the day,—a summary contrived by one who was within the Church, and whose *Satyre of the Three Estates* was performed at Linlithgow Palace in presence of the King, the Queen, and the Court, of many nobles, bishops, and dignitaries, and a multitude of commoners,—a remarkable fact considering the severity of the reflections on the vices of the time, and especially of the clergy. The average priest, according to Lindsay, summed up his theology thus:

"He bade me not to Christ be kind,—
To keep the law with heart and mind,
And love and thank His great mercie
From sin and hell that savéd me,
And love my neighbour as mysel,
Of this no thing he could me tell,
But gave me penance, ilk ane day [every day]
And Ave Marie for to say,
And Fridays five no fish to eat,
But butter and eggs are better meat,
And with ane plack to buy ane messe [mass]
From drunken Sir John Latinless.
Friars swear by their profession
None can be safe without confession,
And causes all men understand
That it is goddis own command;
Yet it is nought but men's own dream
The people to confound and shame.
It is nought else but man's own law

Wherewith they assail them as they will,
And makes the law conform theretill.
Sitting is mennis conscience
Above Goddis magnificence,
And does the people teach and tyste
To serve the Pope, the Antichrist.
To the great God omnipotent
Confess thy sin and sore repent,
And trust in Christ, as writis Paul,
Who shed His blood to save thy soul;
For none can thee absolve but He,
Nor take away thy sin from thee."

"He me absolvit from ane plack,
Though he no price with me would mak:
And mickle Latin he did mummle
I heard no thing but hummill-bummill.
He showed me nought of Goddis word
Whilk sharper is than any sword,
And deep into our heart does prent
Our sin wherethrough we do repent.
He put me no thing into fear
Wherethrough I should my sin forbear:
He shaw me not the malediction
Of God for sin, nor the affliction,
And in this life the great mischief
Ordained to punish whore and thief:
Nor shaw he me of hellis pain
That I might fear, and vice refrain.
He counselled me not to abstene
And lead a holy life and clean.
Of Christis blood nothing he knew
Nor of His promises full true,
That savis all that will believe
That Satan shall us never grieve."

In "The Monarchie," addressed by Lindsay—

"To faithful prudent pastors spiritual,
To noble earls and lordis temporal,"

he further sets forth his views on the need of reformation, and in "The Complaint of the King's Papingo" [Peacock] he bitterly satirises the corruptions of the Church, especially in the matter of the treatment by the clergy of the dying.

The average parson of Lindsay's day is thus pictured:

> "The proud parson I think truly
> He leads his life right lustily:
> Forwhy he has none other tyne [trouble]
> But tak his tiend and spend it syne [afterwards]
> But he is oblyote [obliged] by reeson
> To preach until his perrochion [parishioners],
> Though they want preaching seventeen year
> He will not want ane boll of beir."

This was not the opinion nor the outcry of an enemy of the Church, but of a friend, who saw the Church's danger and desired an awakening. Looking abroad on the superstitions, pilgrimages, immoralities, and unspirituality of the age, he cries:

> "Set up! Thou sleepest all too long, O Lord!
> And mak ane hastie reformation
> On them whilk tramp doun Thy gracious word
> And has ane deadly indignation
> At them whilk maketh true narration
> Of Thy Gospel, showing the verity.
> O Lord! I make Thee supplication,
> Support our Faith, our Hope and Charity."

The Reformation both in Scotland and England was a wholesale attack upon the Church's abuses, life, position, doctrine, and practices. It and the European Reformation generally was the outcome of these centuries of muttering and murmuring against growing

corruptions and new superstitions. The earlier Reformers never thought of leaving, much less of injuring or destroying, the ecclesiastical fabric in society and life, but struggled inside the Church to reform its abuses and right its wrongs. In a word, the contrast between the two classes of earlier and later Reformers is that men like Wycliffe and the Lollards strove to bring about a reformation from within and at the Church's own instigation; while the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a general attack on the whole system with a view to reconstruction on a more scriptural and apostolic basis.

CHAPTER III

Wycliffe's Student Life

From where it rises amid the rocky picturesque corries of Cross Fell in Cumberland, down through the fair valley between Barnard Castle and Old Richmond, and thence dividing Yorkshire from Durham until it pours itself into the North Sea in an estuary of very considerable extent, there are few rivers in England more charming and beautiful than the Tees. Cross Fell, where the stream has its source, is one of the finest of the Cumberland hills, and the scenery of the valleys around is indescribably beautiful, — with rugged precipice and green valley and distant far-off view of the mountain mists and lakes, which drew forth the aspirations and eulogies of Wordsworth, Southey, Arnold, and Ruskin,—a land of mountain and of flood very like Caledonia, itself indeed only a rough, rude continuation into England of the piled-up Scottish Cheviots, thus throwing a great mountain barrier across the land from Lindisfarne to Morecambe Bay. The barrier of nature was not deemed ample enough by the Roman legions, who inch by inch fought their way northwards, driving the rude tribes in front of them. These Cumberland bens and fells became the refuge of many of them, while others fled to the Cheviots and northwards. Hadrian's Wall, seven feet

thick, built of regularly dressed stone, can still be traced a little north of Cross Fell, stretching across the entire breadth of Cumberland and Northumberland like a great stone barrier to keep off the wild incursions of the North. At Hexham and Newcastle the Roman remains are numerous and valuable, the ditch, stone wall and stations, castles and turrets being traceable all along the line of route, while at Borcovicus one of the fortresses still survives in very perfect preservation.

The second and the sixth legions built this gigantic barrier, which occupies three thousand acres, and took several years to build by the twelve thousand soldiers employed. A curious and unique passage in Procopius describes the Roman legionaries' impressions of the land beyond the wall and the southern parts below the Tees: "Moreover, in this isle of Brittia, men of ancient time built a long wall, cutting off a great portion of it: for the soil, and the men, and all other things are not alike on both sides. For on the eastern (southern) side of the wall there is a wholesomeness of air in conformity with the seasons, moderately warm in summer and cool in winter. Many men inhabit here living much as other men. The trees with their appropriate fruits flourish in season, and their corn-lands are as productive as others; and the district appears sufficiently fertilised by streams. But on the western (northern) side all is different, insomuch, indeed, that it would be impossible for a man to live there even half an hour. Vipers and serpents innumerable, with all other kinds of wild beasts, infest that place; and what is most strange, the natives affirm that if any one passing that wall should proceed to the other side, he would die immediately,—unable

to endure the unwholesomeness of the atmosphere, death also attacking such beasts as go thither, destroys them. They say that the souls of men departed are always conducted to this place; but in what manner I will explain immediately, having frequently heard it from men of that region, relating it most seriously, although I would rather ascribe their asseverations to a certain dreamy faculty which possesses them."

Written in the sixth century soon after the Roman legions had abandoned Britain in order to return to the defence of the Eternal City, the Byzantine historian gathers up the fearful stories and terrible tales of the Britain beyond Hadrian's Wall, which to him was the "ultima Thule" of being. Strange that he should describe the Roman legionary peering into the mist and darkness beyond the wall with superstitious and supernatural curiosity, when the Emperor whose name is borne by the gigantic barrier did something similar in the spiritual world, addressing his soul at his life's close as "animula, blandula, vagula," and wondering how possibly the "vital spark of heavenly flame" could live in the darkness and dimness and mystery of the unseen. Hobbes' dying speech—"Now for a jump into the great Perhaps," and Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, conjure up the vision from the wall of the half-Christian Emperor and the never-ceasing gaze of Humanity into the great Unknown Land.

To Wycliffe another view besides that presented itself,—the vision of the unfulfilled spiritual aspirations of his island-nation. Like Dante and the other Renaissance spirits, his eyes were strained in peering into the good time coming and the long-hoped for Golden Age and reign of Truth and Love. Clouds and

darkness rolled blackly in front of him, as black as the dank mists beyond the wall he must have known so well; but, as "the morning star of the Reformation," he led the way into the dimness of an unpropitious future, and himself was the first to break into the blackness and proclaim the new era of intellectual, spiritual, and moral liberty.

The northern part of England, however, with which Wycliffe's name is associated, has other elements of interest connected with it as bearing on the early reformer's boyhood and training. The scenery of the Tees valley, with the background of the massive Western mountain systems, and the rich verdure of the pastures clothing the river on either side, has not lost its attraction and charm even to-day, when a few hours suffice to land one at the foot of the great St. Bernard and five days to cross to the New World. Barnard Castle is to-day in ruins, standing at the north extremity of Barnard town and the river; but even in decay it rises a majestic object of historic interest and an imposing Warden of the Tees valley. In Wycliffe's day the Castle was the greatest and most powerful after Durham, where the prince-bishop held his court and wielded both crozier and sceptre. The ruins to-day cover nearly seven acres; and looking out from the summit of the gigantic fortification which towers up seventy feet from the bed of the Tees and commands a view of the entire vale, it is not difficult to reanimate the old scene of feudal strength and baronial magnificence. It was in the year 1178 that Barnard Balliol, grandfather of John Balliol, king of Scotland, raised the huge pile; and it is not without interest to remember that these early associations of

Wycliffe with that powerful family were continued at Oxford, when at Balliol College he made his mark and won his fame, and finally became its Master.

The village of Wycliffe or "water-cliff" in Yorkshire (made famous by *Marmion*), stands between Barnard Castle and Old Richmond; and the chief family of the place bore the hamlet's name, and had borne it ever since the Norman Conquest. The manor-house of Wycliffe in very few generations wanted a Wycliffe as its occupant. The village to-day is a trifling one, with some two hundred inhabitants, a beautiful parish church and valuable rectory, Sir C. Constable being the patron. It was not exactly in the village bearing his parents' name that the Reformer was born, but at Spresswell, a tiny hamlet. The village stood about midway between Barnard Castle and Old Richmond, which is not far distant from the present prosperous town of Richmond on the Swale, with its huge castle, one of the most majestic ruins in England, its great keep, a hundred feet high, one of the most perfect specimens extant of Norman baronial architecture. Wycliffe was born not only in a land where feudal castles lifted their towers every few miles, as at Barnard, Richmond, Durham, Alnwick, and royal Bamborough, but in an age when the Norman feudalism and spirit were rampant. The Norman Conquest was a matter of only two and a half centuries previous, and the life reflected in Percy's *Reliques* was the life of northern England at Wycliffe's birth.

Two members of a family of this name were conspicuous in the wars with Scotland. During the early part of the reign of Edward the Third, Robert de Wyclif (who is described as of the wapentake of

Gilling) was commissioned by the King to raise troops to repel Robert Bruce. In 1334 and during the following ten years, writs to the same effect were frequently addressed to Roger de Wyclif, who is described as of the same locality. We find this individual associated with the Vavassors, Maulevrers, Markenfields, Fairfaxes, Scropes, and Darrells of Yorkshire. (See *Rot. Scot.* i. 222, 287, 303, 369, 528, 653.) In 1604 the Wyclifs of Wyclif ranked as gentlemen, and were returned as recusants. (See *Peacock's List of Roman Catholics in the County of York*, p. 80.) In 1635, Simon Birkbeck, "minister of God's Word at Gilling in Richmondshire," writes thus: "John Wyclif was born in the north, where there is (near this place where I live) an ancient worshipful house bearing the name of Wyclif of Wyclif" (*The Protestant's Evidence*, ii. 71, ed. 1635). In all probability, then, the future Reformer came of a family of considerable antiquity, which at the time of his birth was something more than respectable.

The date of his birth is indeed very uncertain. He died in 1384, and could not then have been younger than sixty; and accordingly a date somewhere about 1324 or a little earlier is usually accepted as a convenient and probable year for the rise in Teesdale of the morning star of the Reformation. Probably he was baptized in the old parish church of Wycliffe: his father was a scion of the house of Wycliffe, although nothing can be traced of his rank and profession in life. The family records contain no reference to the Reformer, and the family all through were staunch adherents of the Roman faith. A similar dimness surrounds the Reformer's early training and education.

Probably he received his earliest instructions at the Abbey of Egglestone, a few miles up the valley from Spresswell, near Rokeby, where the Tees and the Greta unite, and where, amid scenery of surpassing loveliness, rises the old castle, which only ten years before Wycliffe's birth was demolished by an army of Scots who, encouraged by the victory of Bannockburn, ravaged North England and devastated castle and hamlet,—an incident made for ever celebrated in Sir Walter Scott's novel.

Egglestone Abbey, though now only a perpetual curacy, was in Wycliffe's youth a great and powerful monastic establishment; and probably within its cloisters he received his first impressions of life and truth. The religious associations of the neighbourhood were very rich and precious. It is the land consecrated for ever by the memories of St. Aidan and the Holy Island of the East Coast, where even yet St. Cuthbert's sea-stone beads and white, wild, ocean-washed ducks, making their home at Lindisfarne and the other isles off Bamborough, rendered illustrious either by missionary saint or modern heroine, speak of the sacred influences early at work in Northumbria. St. Cuthbert's mighty influence was far from being dead even in Wycliffe's day, for Durham Cathedral with its three stately towers and wonderful beauty of situation, bore and bears the name of the great Scottish saint who lies buried beneath the altar, and whose influence was a powerful factor for centuries after his death, so much so, indeed, that at so late a date as at the battle of Flodden in 1513 the English carried in front of them an altar cloth used by him. St. Cuthbert's Cathedral, Durham, one of two English

cathedrals dedicated to Scottish missionaries, — the other being St. Asaph's in Wales, is a very worthy monument to one who first saw the heavenly vision in the Tweed valley and was not disobedient to it, and who from the day the fair young child under the shadow of the Eildons bade him leave his vain sports and follow the Lord, was "modest in the virtue of patience and affable to all who came to him for comfort." The Melrose shepherd became the world - famed missionary-saint. Not so generous in disposition and gentle in bearing was St. Aidan, whom St. Cuthbert his disciple saw Elijah-like ascending to heaven, but who was the pioneer of Christianity in North England. But in the annals of the Christianity of North England Aidan and Cuthbert shine forth with a radiance all their own; and in Wycliffe's day, when the Roman Church had mastered the British for only some three hundred years, the influence of these non-Roman saints was still fresh and living and powerful.

If the purity and simplicity of the Faith proclaimed by Columba from Iona and by Aidan and Cuthbert from Lindisfarne, the holy isles on the east and west of the mainland, drew the youthful student of Egglestone Abbey to them and the Columban Church rather than to Rome, there was another name and influence in northern England which must have appealed to him with even more irresistible force. The Venerable Bede of Jarrow by the Tyne was the first to give his native land the gospel in the native Anglo-Saxon tongue. Cædmon of Whitby at the close of the sixth century sang the "Creation," and included much scripture and scriptural language and thought into the evangelical oratorio which he prepared

in obedience to the angelic answer to his question as to what he should sing,—"Sing the Creation!" Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, who died A.D. 709, translated the Psalms into the people's vernacular. There were other "portions" of the Bible floating in fragments amongst the people in written vellums and dearly-cherished scrolls. But it was Bede who, in the last year of his life (A.D. 735), translated St. John's Gospel into Anglo-Saxon. The scene of his passing in the monastery at Jarrow, his urgent efforts to complete the closing verses of the evangel even though the death-sweat was on his brow and the death-dimness on his eyes, has been made for ever famous by the description of it by his amanuensis, who was none other than St. Cuthbert himself. The last sentence was in danger of being lost in the swellings of Jordan, but it was finished, and with a "gloria in excelsis" the first translator of the Gospel into Anglo-Saxon passed into the land of everlasting song. "Thus died," says Fuller, "this light in a dark place, and thus was completed the first English translation of St. John's Gospel."

Probably about the age of sixteen or seventeen Wycliffe left Teesdale, and evidently, through the powerful influence of the Balliols of Barnard Castle near his native village, he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and began that life of studious repose which was to prepare him for his great work of reform. The close connection between Wycliffe and Balliol College, of which he was finally Master, was undoubtedly due to the fact that John Balliol, father of the King of Scotland, John de Balliol, was the lord of Barnard Castle, and he himself founded the college by the Isis for poor Durham scholars, as an alternative to receiving

a flagellation at the doors of Durham Cathedral, about the year 1265, thus adding a third to the already-existing Merton College (1264) and St. Edmund Hall (1233), the earliest of all the foundations. John Balliol joined the standard of Simon de Montfort and the rebel barons against Henry III., and died in exile in France in 1269. His widow, Devorgilla, brought back his heart to Scotland, and raised up over it the charming Abbey of Sweetheart or Newabbey, some seven miles from Dumfries. The embalmed heart, shrined in silver and ivory, was carried about by her while she lived, on her person, and at her death in 1289 placed in an aumbry near the altar of the beautiful abbey which was the outward token of her affection. The other monument to John Balliol's memory is Balliol College, the statutes of the foundation of which were not compiled until 1282, thirteen years after the Founder's death, and which, still carefully preserved, bear the seal of the devoted Devorgilla. No college in Oxford is so rich in historic and scholarly memories as this, which has given to England, Ireland, and the Colonies, bishops and archbishops innumerable. It has been the school of Stanley, Jowett, Adam Smith, Hamilton, Southey, Arnold, Swinburne, and hosts of celebrated thinkers and poets; it is still the special home of students from northern England and Scotland, as in Wycliffe's day; but it has no finer tradition—if, indeed, exception be made of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, who were burned in front of it—than the pure-hearted, earnest-souled student who with many privations journeyed from its Founder's home beside the Tees to fight a good fight, and both as student and as Master bring lustre to the name of Balliol.

So few details have been handed down as to his early Oxford days, that it is extremely difficult to determine with any approach to accuracy what his exact course was. Some early biographers declare he entered as a commoner at Queen's, founded in 1340 by Robert de Egglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, Edward III.'s consort, who was a Cumberland man; and the seventy poor scholars who were to commemorate the seventy disciples and twelve apostles of the Lord, were preferably to come from the North. Wycliffe was almost certainly educated at Egglestone Abbey in the Eggles domain, and it is quite natural to connect Queen's College with the education of the Egglestone scholar. There can be no doubt that Wycliffe resided at Queen's at a later period in his university career; but there is little, if anything, to show that he had any early connection with the House of the Boar's Head; though it is undoubted that his later student days were spent there. Merton has claimed Wycliffe as her own,—a college famous for its ecclesiastical controversialists, —Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Thomas Bradwardine, who afterwards was elevated to the See of Canterbury. Whether the last-named and Wycliffe ever met is doubtful; but when at Oxford, Wycliffe came under the strong influence of the writings, teachings, and spirit of one of the greatest and most enlightened of mediæval prelates. Whether it was Balliol, Merton, or Queen's College which housed Wycliffe's student life, at any rate he so distingnished himself that Knighton, canon of Leicester, his bitter foe, said of him—"As a doctor in theology, Wycliffe was the most eminent in those days; in philosophy, second to none; and in scholastic learning, incomparable. He made it

his great aim, with the subtilty of his learning and by the profundity of his own genius, to surpass the genius of other men, and to vary from their opinions." From his earliest days Wycliffe seems like the Scottish Church (according to Wynton), "to have loved a way of his own,"—to have been an original, independent, and fresh thinker, bringing into the arena of ecclesiastical life a free spirit and a bold intellect.

Wycliffe seems to have been an earnest thinker and a diligent student, imbibing the principles of Aristotelianism, the first system of the age; and in his after life he wielded with wonderful power the weapons of logic and analysis with which his early training so abundantly supplied him. He was also a careful student of civil and canon law, and to some extent of mathematics and natural philosophy. But his guiding principle all through was the authority of Scripture; and even from this early period of his career he was regarded as the "gospel doctor," bringing everything to the bar of Scripture and revelation, as against alike the teachings of the Fathers and the logic and metaphysics of the schools.

In the year 1345 a remarkable event took place which had a definite and direct effect upon the mind of Wycliffe. A terrible plague broke out in Tartary, and after ravaging Asia and Lower Egypt passed to the isles of Greece, the Mediterranean, and Italy. It spread even beyond the Alps, and every European nation suffered from its terrible ravages. For two years it wrought its havoc, and this was followed all over Europe by a series of earthquakes; and from June to December of 1345, England was drenched with tremendous rains. In August the plague was discovered at

Dorchester and then at London, and, spreading, claimed thousands as its tribute. Wycliffe was twenty-three years old, and his youthful mind was impressed with the tremendous epidemic, which not only cleared villages and cities of their inhabitants, but even spared not the beasts of the field. The whole national life suffered, and even grave level-headed men declared that the world had lost half its population. Over and over again, directly and indirectly in his works, he refers to this time of visitation and tremendous trial. The physical troubles led to moral ones, and the whole national character and *morale* became deteriorated,—husbands being deserted by wives, children by parents, and the people by the clergy. Rapine, lust, theft, wickedness of every kind became rampant. In 1348 the scourge abated, but the effects of it remained with Wycliffe, who ever after took a grim and despairing view of the future of the human race, which is abundantly exhibited in his earliest work, published in 1356—eight years later—entitled, *The last Age of the Church*, in which in both a literal and an allegorical manner he pictures what he believed to be the terrors of the "last times," of "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," and "the arrow that flieth by day." He pictures these disasters as acts of providential vengeance on the evils of the day and the defections of the Church. The strong early impression of these national disasters went with Wycliffe all through his life, as the death of his bosom-friend did with Luther and Tennyson, and as inversely the prospects of the arrival of the millennial year A.D. 1000 did with the divines of that period.

The terror of the past and the fear of the future

have ever been dominant forces in moulding individual and national moral and religious life; and while the approaching close of the first millennium stimulated Christendom to repentance, reform, and service,—witness the vast number of church foundations and restorations which date from A.D. 950 to 1000,—on the other hand the dismal and harrowing experiences of the past have often brought about the same purifying and stimulating movements. Without a doubt the terrors of the night and of the day through which Wycliffe passed in the time of the plague and the earthquake and the flood, quickened his earnestness and deepened his purpose. On the other hand, they also filled him with more or less of an apocalyptic spirit, somewhat akin to that of St. Cyprian, who in his dream saw the vast amphitheatre crowded with spectators, and Satan appeared on the arena, and, waving his hand around the great belt of humanity, cried aloud—"All these are mine!" Wycliffe dreamed a similar dream at this period, with similar effects,—the uprising of a fresh spirit, and the resurrection of a new hope, desire, inspiration, and purpose. And yet there is a strong tinge of despair and apprehension in *The Last Age of the Church* strongly reminiscent of St. Bernard of Clugny's "De Contemptu Mundi," that weird and wonderful poem of 3000 lines in which he inveighs with bitterness on the corruptions of the age, the decadence of civilisation, and the degradation of the Church, the only speck of brightness in a great smoky fog-land of invective being the charming verses beginning "Jerusalem the Golden." So Wycliffe's view, a century and a half later than that when the soul of the Cluniac monk mourned over the sins of the age,

and longed for the second advent of the Restorer of all things, is that all is wrong, and that only the personal return of Christ to purify His House will rectify the age. In both of these Jeremiahs there is the commingling of the voice from the cross with the voice from the skies,—"consummatum est," and ἐν τούτῳ νικᾷς,—despair as to man, and yet hope as to God.

In 1360 or 1361, Wycliffe became Master of Balliol Hall, afterwards Balliol College, founded by the Balliols of Barnard Castle near his old home. Ordained a priest, he was presented to the rectory of Fillingham in Lincolnshire, and resigned his position at Balliol, which he held for only a short time.

But though the rector of the quiet country parish of Fillingham, he was a frequent visitor at Oxford, residing at Queen's College and prosecuting his theological studies. In 1368 he obtained from his bishop leave of absence for two years to study at Oxford. Later on he exchanged Fillingham for Ludgarshall in Buckinghamshire, in order to be within nearer reach of the seat of learning.

While at Oxford he studied strenuously, and was an active member of the University governing body. As a Bachelor of Theology he gave lectures on Holy Scripture, and even then declared that this was the final standard of appeal in all cases of controversy.

In 1365, Wycliffe was appointed by Simon Islip, archbishop of Canterbury, who has left his name so indelibly associated with the city by the Isis, Warden of Canterbury Hall, a new college just founded by him and absorbed later on in Christ Church. Islip's intention in founding this college was to provide a home of theological training for monks and secular

clergy alike, and he gave Wycliffe the appointment in recognition of "his practical qualifications of fidelity, circumspection, and diligence, as well as for his learning and estimable life." Wycliffe had been a fellow-student of Islip. "John Wicclyve" appears as the Warden of 1365, his predecessor, Woodhall, a monk, having been deposed. Though considerable dispute has been waged as to whether this "John Wicclyve" was the Reformer, the balance of proof seems to rest in favour of the idea, though a John de Whyteclyve or Whytcliff was at Oxford at the same time, was patronised by Archbishop Islip, and presented by him to the living of Mayfield. It may have been that this was the Warden of Merton and not the other; but on the whole there seems more evidence in favour of the other view, which would make out that he who was afterwards the Reformer was student and Master of Balliol, Warden of Canterbury Hall, and afterwards a resident at Queen's College.

After the death of Archbishop Islip, whose name still lingers round Oxford and the Isis like the breath of the sweet-briar in the Magdalen court, Simon Langham, who succeeded him, removed Wycliffe and the secular teachers from Canterbury Hall and gave it back again to the monastic brethren, Wycliffe retiring to Queen's College, where he remained very constantly for several years, taking his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and distinguishing himself by his glowing and vigorous preaching. He went by the name of "Doctor Evangelicus" (the Evangelical doctor), just as other scholastic divines were styled "Subtle," "Angelic," "Irrefragable," "Seraphic," "Profound," etc. Though steeped in scholastic philosophy, and drawing

out his logical and metaphysical subtleties in his tracts and pamphlets with wearisome exactitude and all the deadly conclusiveness of the old Deductive Philosophy, when he climbed the pulpit he seems to have rid himself of Aristotelian mists and the brain-webs of the mediæval Schoolmen, and to have declared the divine word and the holy gospel with a magnificent freshness and a simple clearness and directness which were irresistible. In an age when, through the pulpit excesses and absurdities of the friars, preaching had degenerated into either drivel or buffoonery, the Evangelical doctor refreshed the heart of students and people alike by a fresh disclosure of the Person of Christ and His sufficiency for the needs of the soul of man. Thus from his earliest days as a student, Wycliffe seems to have aimed at the restoration of a plain and simple evangel, ardently proclaimed by direct and homely sermons, while at the same time cultivating in his own life and habit the most scholarly and laborious methods. Great as a preacher of the evangel in nervous English and with impassioned power, he was even greater as a subtle doctor of the Church and a learned exponent of the Faith.

CHAPTER IV

Tiara and Crown

By the close of the thirteenth century the position of the Roman See was finally established. Protest after protest had been raised against the assumptions of the Bishop of Rome. The Greek Church had long since established its independent and rival organisation in the East, and raised a vast ecclesiastical edifice which denied the Pontiff entrance and recognition. Minor protests came from France and Germany and even from Italy. But the logical movement had to develop. Having established the position of the Roman Pontiff as St. Peter's direct and only representative and Vicar, and claimed for him a special divine voice, the subsequent developments were almost a necessity; and the latter-day development of doctrine as explained by Cardinal Newman left no other course open than finally to announce the decree of papal infallibility as declared in the famous announcement from the Pope in 1870: "We, firmly adhering to the tradition received from the commencement of the Christian religion to the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Christian religion, and the salvation of Christian people, with the approval of the Sacred Council, teach and define it as a doctrine revealed of God that the Roman Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, or when

in the exercise of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines by his supreme apostolic authority any doctrine of faith or manners, ought to be considered by the whole Church as possessing, through the divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter, that infallibility which the Divine Redeemer chose to furnish to the Church when defining any doctrine of faith or manners, and that such definitions are of themselves unchangeable. If anyone, which may the Lord forbid, should dare to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema."

After such a definition, not only of papal supremacy but of papal infallibility, one can well understand and appreciate the mild protest of the Greek bishops who republished the canons of the first seven œcumenic Synods,—the seven councils before the great schism between East and West,—when they declared in the preface to the Book of Canons that "considering the long period which has elapsed and the great alteration of circumstances which has taken place in the West since the schism, we need a line of demarcation between those rules which it is now possible to enforce in orthodox Western Churches and those, however venerable, which it is expedient not to insist upon. It would be arbitrary to trace this line of demarcation anywhere, except where the Holy Spirit through the Catholic Church has already traced it, that is, between the canons of the seven œcumenic councils and all other regulations."

Papal pretension, exclusiveness, and pride were at the root of the great schism, and it was against the same evils that the early Reformers struck. Pope Gregory VII. carried these pretensions to a height

when he kept Henry IV. of Germany outside in the snow at Canossa till he had been thoroughly humiliated. "Germany," said Prince Bismarck in one of his famous sentences in the Reichstag, "is not going back to Canossa either bodily or spiritually" (Jack's *Life of Bismarck*, p. 386), and followed up Pius IX.'s slight to the German Parliament in refusing to accept Cardinal Prince Hohenlohe as German Ambassador at Rome, by expelling the Jesuits, limiting the Church's powers of punishment and discipline and organisation,—the four "May Laws" which amazed the world and brought to an end all thought of the Pope overshadowing the King in Germany at any rate. In England, Henry II., powerful and able King as he was, had to submit to humiliating discipline at Canterbury Cathedral before the shrine of Thomas à Becket. These two well-punished Henrys are not the only instances in which the papal rod was applied to royal persons on disobedience to the Vatican decrees. The theory had come to be accepted as correct and right that the great Soul-Father at Rome was above all kings, and sovereign of sovereigns.

The epoch of Boniface VIII. (1294–1304) marks the decline of papal ascendancy. Germany during the period of interregnum after the death of Frederic II. in 1250, refused the interference of the papacy, and its claim to have a divine right over sovereigns. France under Philip the Fair took an independent national stand, and England under Edward I. did the same. The latter was in a position of exceptional difficulty, for the tribute which a hundred and fifty years before King John had promised the Pope in token of the vassalage of England to the Roman See

was still being paid. It is an easy thing to pass an Act of Oblivion when it proves suitable and politic, and to declare that properties diverted at the Reformation from sacred to secular purposes shall be allowed to remain in their present tenants' hands under the circumstances of the present day, and that the Roman See no longer makes claim to England; but every Roman canonist knows full well that by Canon Law England is the property of the Roman See. But even although King John had given his little rocky island in the north-west of Europe to the Pope in a present, there was enough national feeling left to face several papal abuses. When Boniface by his Bull "Clericis laicos" forbade the exaction of national taxes and revenues from the Church revenues, Edward's plucky and vigorous refusal to submit to Italian dictation showed the growth of independent national feeling. Even the papal tribute was usually very tardily paid and always in arrear; and Wycliffe wrote a State paper about it; and finally the English Parliament repudiated it, and the Pope got no more.

In France the fight between Crown and Tiara was, however, on a larger and more important scale. The same demand had been made by the Pope as in England, and the Bull required that the Church and clergy should be free of national taxation. Philip the Fair openly refused to exempt the Church, and carried the French people with him; and, in addition, expelled the clergy from all posts connected with the administration of the country's laws, and appointed secular lawyers in their places. The Faculty of Law was then in amazing power in France, and was in opposition to the Pope, and educated the French people on national law and patriotism.

One difference, however, between the English and the French clergy lay in this, that whereas the former were generally blindly loyal and obedient to the Roman See, the Gallican priests prided themselves, as from yore they did and even yet to some small extent still do, on their independence and national privileges, and consequently the mass of them sided with Philip the Fair as against the Pope. In 1301, Boniface declared to Philip in a Bull that he had France from his hand and during his pleasure, just as a previous Pope had done to the English King John, and required Philip to appear in Rome before a council. At Paris the Bull was burned publicly, and in April 1302 the King and Estates General met and drew up a remonstrance to the Pope and cardinals. The Pope replied by his famous Bull "Unam Sanctam," which declared the supremacy of the Pope over all Christian kings. The Bull "Clericis Laicos" merely asked immunity from taxation for his Church; "Unam Sanctam" put the papal See into a position of authority over all crowns, which the Bull "Venerabilem" of Innocent III. confirmed,—the claim being made that "all things are put under him," as representing the Founder of Christianity. A friendly conference between Rome and France was tried but without avail; and, not to be outdone in greatness by the Fisherman's successor, Philip, who seems to have been fair not only in appearance but also in his judgment as well as not behind in the fighting qualities indicated by his name, summoned His Holiness to Paris, and before the Estates General threatened to have a general council gathered in Paris to depose Boniface from his See. Seven hundred of the university bishops, clergy, friars signed

the appeal. French emissaries were sent to Rome, and at Anagni, where Boniface was residing, hiring soldiers from the rival town of Ferentino, they attacked the Pope and cardinals. For some days His Holiness was imprisoned, rescued only by an army from Rome; but the shock was too great for an aged Pontiff of eighty-six, and one of the oldest in the long line of "bridge-makers," and he died of fever or madness. The Roman Chair was, however, thoroughly humiliated, and France was victorious; and, finally, after Benedict XI.'s short reign, through its influence and power a French Pope, Clement V., was elected, and to please France moved the Holy See from Rome to Avignon, where, during the period described by Roman historians as the "Babylonian Captivity," it remained for more than seventy years—until 1736. The palace of the Popes at Avignon still stands, grey and gloomy, overlooking one of the most fertile districts of France, and surmounted by a colossal gold statue of the Virgin; just as at Marseilles, a little farther south, on the summit of the lofty Church of Nôtre Dame de la Garde, overlooking the Mediterranean, there gleams the great gilded Virgin holding in her arms a colossal child-Christ, who lifts up His hands in blessing over the blue sea and the moving fleets of the world.

The Pope at Avignon became, however, for the most part only a creature of the French Court, and the jealousy of Germany, England, and other nations was excited by the position of the Pontiff. When the great schism took place, and there was a Pope at Avignon and one at Rome, and even a third, it became a national question as to which nation was to be the

nominator and guardian of the head of the Church. The schism came to an end, but the religious feelings of Christendom were outraged to see the head of the Church divided. The great and magnificent idea of one supreme spiritual head for the world was shattered, and shattered for ever, by the divided papacy.

The assumptions and claims of the Popes prior to the great schism were indeed many and great. As Vicar of Christ, the Pope claimed the right of summoning general councils alone, whereas formerly Pope and Emperor did so conjointly. He alone had in his hands to present the pallium woven of the lambs'-wool shorn off by the Roman sisters on St. Agnes Eve: for this the Roman See received the most important part of its revenue, and frequent changes meant heavier sums for the papal exchequer. John XXII. was a master of finance in this way. The Churches of Christendom had been supposed to have freedom of election of their own prelates, but this freedom degenerated into a farce. Appeals from various parts of Christendom were more and more encouraged, and the Papal Curia came to be regarded as the supreme judgment-seat of the world; but, unfortunately, the Roman Court was universally suspected of partiality and corruption. The Pope's universal power of absolution and dispensation—the "plenitudo potestatios," made of no account all other decisions sacred and secular. The right of the Roman See to exact taxation from all the Churches of Christendom was oppressively carried out. For two and a half centuries papal legates were sent to various countries to exercise all kinds of commissions, overriding all local authority. The Canon Law had also been gradually summarised and codified, and

the Isidorian Decretals were accepted, although well known to be a forgery. And apart from the serene and absolute authority of the Roman See, every prelate, whether a native of the country or a foreigner, was subjected to entire obedience to Rome, and he in turn was obliged to take the oath of absolute and blind allegiance to the Holy See.

In a word, the whole of Christendom had gradually become bound hand and foot, heart and head, in a gigantic organisation, every part of which was supposed to move in entire obedience to the head of the Church whose home was at Tiber-side. After Boniface VIII. the whole system broke down; but the plan of a gigantic Rome government had almost finally triumphed, had it not been for the failure of the central figure. The Roman idea of universal spiritual rule in succession to the old imperial secular idea accounts for the vigour of Milton's description of the Roman power, which, he says, "is a double thing to deal with, and claims a twofold power, ecclesiastical and political, both usurped, and the one supporting the other." Well may Adam Smith, in speaking of the Church of Rome, say it "is the most formidable combination that ever was formed against the authority and security of civil government, as well as against the liberty, reason, and happiness of mankind." The late John Angel James truly said that its nature was "but a mixture of the craft of the serpent with the ferocity of the tiger." "How often, says he, "does it conceal a demon's malignity under a seraph's smile."

If, indeed, the claim of the Pope of Rome is that his descent from the apostles is exclusive, direct, and undoubted, then, judging from the characters of many of

the occupants of the See, it must in all faithfulness be admitted that the descent is very great. Since St. Peter there have been 297 Popes, of whom 24 were anti-Popes, and one—Pope Joan—was probably a woman. Nineteen Popes abandoned Rome, and 35 reigned abroad. Eight Popes only reigned a month or less, 40 reigned a year, 22 for two years, 54 for five years, 51 for fifteen years, 18 for twenty years, and 9 for a longer period. Of all this long line of "Vicars of Christ," 31 were officially declared to be heretics or usurpers; and of the 266 remaining Pontiffs, 64 came to a violent end, 18 by poison and 4 by strangulation. Apart altogether from the Popes who spoke the infallible voice from Avignon, 26 others were deposed, expelled from Rome, and banished. Six of the Holy Fathers, in spite of their vows had children; while John VIII., the successor of Leo IV., was, on the direct testimony of Roman Catholic writers, a woman, though absolute certainty is unattainable. She is said to have been of English descent though born at Mentz, and obtained the See by sinister arts, pretending she was a man. The *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493, written by Roman Catholics twenty-four years before Luther's Reformation began, tells the entire tale; while Roman Catholic wits like the Carmelite friar Mantuaw, made epigrams and witticisms regarding the unfortunate slip in the moral way—"a very little one"—which "Pope Joan" made, and in the ending of which she died:

"Papa pater patrum peperit papissa papellum."

Urban V. confessed his fallibility, and allowed himself to be censured by a council; while both

Victor III. and Adrian VI. publicly acknowledged that they had sinned. One Holy Father declared himself an atheist, and denied the immortality of the soul. Ranke's *History of the Popes*, and even the records of Roman Catholic historians themselves, like Lingard and Platina, bear abundant testimony to exceedingly frequent and sometimes most alarming absences of the Holy Spirit from the papal chair. The history of the Popes is the story of throned and crowned humanity with a spiritual aureole round its head, and glorified above ordinary earthly sovereigns with the halos of another world; and yet this is all that it amounts to and all that it could accomplish. The world and the Church generally have been thankful if they have been fairly decent in their characters and moderately just in their dealings; no more was expected, and glad have they been even for such small mercies.

After his return from Rome in January 1875, the late Cardinal Manning preached in Kensington Pro-Cathedral from the text—"Mine eyes have seen the King in His beauty," and somewhat profanely applied the text to himself as having just returned from a sight of and a visit to worthy old Pio Nono. "At this moment," he declared, "the throne of the Vicar of Christ is surrounded by his most inveterate enemies. Humanly-speaking, the glory of the apostolic throne has departed, and its majesty and power have been overthrown by the world. At such a moment we are reminded of the words of the text;—we shall see the glory of the Vicar of Christ yet again with all its prerogatives." If the reference was merely to the material glory and glitter of the Papal Court and States, which Victor Emmanuel and the Italian people

saw fit to reduce, and which Garibaldi's sword sent to the four winds, one can agree with the preacher or not according to the measure of prophecy given to us. But if his reference was to the moral and spiritual power of the occupants of the Roman See in past ages, one can only smile gently at the thought of some of the "beauties" who have adorned the Chair in generations past.

The oath taken by bishop and priest of allegiance to the Holy See is suggestive:

"I, *N.* Elect of the Church of *N.*, will from this hour forth be faithful and obedient to the blessed Apostle Peter, to the holy Roman Church, and to our Lord, Lord *N.* Pope *N.* and to his successors canonically entering. I will not be of any counsel, by consent or deed, to deprive them of life or limb, or to ensnare them by any deceit or fraud, or to lay violent hands upon them in any way whatever; or to offer them any injury under any pretence whatever. Moreover, any counsel which they may entrust to me, either in their own persons or by their messengers or letters, I will disclose to no one, knowingly, to their hurt.

"*The Roman Popedom and the royalties of St. Peter, I shall help them to retain and defend, saving my own order, against every man.* The legate of the Apostolic See, in passing and repassing, I shall honourably entertain, and assist in his necessities. *The rights, honours, privileges, and authority of the holy Roman Church, of our Lord the Pope, and his successors aforesaid, I shall give all diligence to preserve, defend, advance, and promote.* Nor will I be of any counsel, undertaking, or management whereby anything sinister may be contrived against our said Lord, or

the said Roman Church, or whereby anything prejudicial to their persons, rights, honour, state, or power may be plotted. And if I shall discover that such be done by others, whosoever they be, or by their procurement, I shall hinder the same to the utmost of my power; and as soon as possible signify it to our said Lord, or to some other who shall inform him thereof.

"The rules of the Holy Fathers, the Apostolic decrees and ordinances or appointments, reservations, provisions, and mandates, I will observe with all my might, and cause to be observed by others. *Heretics, schismatics, and rebels against the same our Lord and his successors,* I WILL PERSECUTE AND IMPUGN TO THE UTMOST OF MY POWER. When summoned to Synod I will obey, unless prevented by some canonical impediment. I will visit the thresholds of the Apostles every third year, in my own person, and render to our said Lord, and his successors, an account of my whole pastoral office, and of every particular in any way whatever relating to the state of my church, to the discipline of my clergy and people, and, in short, to the salvation of the souls committed to my charge: and I will humbly receive and execute, with the utmost diligence, the Apostolic mandates given in reply to the same. But if I shall be hindered by any legitimate impediment from doing so in person, I will discharge all the aforesaid duties by a trusty messenger, selected from the bosom of my own chapter, and commissioned for this special purpose, or by some other church dignitary, or otherwise exalted person; or, these failing me, by a diocesan priest; or, a clergy altogether failing me, by some other presbyter, secular or regular, of known

probity and religion, and fully instructed in all the aforesaid particulars. But of such impediment I will give certificates by lawful proofs, to be transmitted by the same messenger, to the holy Roman Church's Cardinal President of the Congregation of Sacred Synod: moreover, the possessions belonging to my mense I shall neither sell, nor bestow, nor mortgage, nor hurt in any way."

The theory of the Church of Rome, which had now overspread the whole of Europe, ousted the native and aboriginal branches of the Catholic Church, and imposed her ritual and priesthood on all the lands of European Christendom, not indeed without long and severe yet unsuccessful struggle on their part,—her theory was that kings and queens should be the Christian's servants, and should do the bidding of the Church's head, St. Peter's successor, Christ's Vicar, the Roman Pontiff, whose Bulls and briefs, thundered from the Chair of St. Peter's at Rome, were theoretically infallible and practically omnipotent to the ends of the earth.

The dawn of Christianity found the Church a weakling, hardly able to bear up under the fire of persecution and the blight of obloquy; but years brought her strength, and having lived through and lived down three centuries of such persecution as has never been equalled in any age and in any country, she at last by sheer importunity and longlivedness won the approving word of the Roman Emperor, and Constantine put the cross upon his crown, and was proud to be called a servant of the Crucified. Tables were now turned; and, conscious of growing influence, the Church began to assume powers and privileges which she never even dreamt of claiming before. The fourth century found her

dominant, and her prelates taking rank before the very princes of the blood: the splendour of episcopal robes and retinues and residence eclipsed those of kings and emperors. In the fourth century we find St. Ambrose excommunicating a Roman Emperor, and by the power of the keys refusing him admission to the sacred rites of Holy Communion. A century or two later, and Pope Hildebrand asserts the absolute supremacy of the Roman See over all others, and formulates that High Ultramontane doctrine—that principle of the perfect independence and sovereignty of the Church,—of its right to direct and guide the State,—and of the latter's obligation to protect and defend and aggrandise her—which is to-day the strength and the weakness of the Church of Rome, and which every day sees her asserting more strongly and more dogmatically.

During the dark and Middle Ages, all cases of dispute in whatever part of Christendom—whether between nation and nation, prince and prince, king and subject, the Church and the world—were referred to Rome as to a final court of appeal, and her decisions were universally accepted,—her voice was the last in every discussion,—her judgment carried the day and closed the case. History tells us of one Pope actually compelling a certain King to recall his Queen whom he had divorced and outlawed; and everyone knows how a century or two later, at Canossa, the Roman Pontiff, having excommunicated the whole of Germany for disobeying his orders, kept the Emperor standing barefooted in the snow, without a single attendant, clad in nothing save a sackcloth robe, for three whole days,—till it pleased His Holiness to grant him an audience; and, having chastised him with a scourge of knotted cords, to

release him and his Empire from the ban under which they had been placed. The story of that humiliating insult to Imperial Majesty has not died away even yet, for nothing pleased Prince Bismarck better than to retaliate by oppressing the Roman Catholic prelates of Germany by the "Falk Laws," and to declare in their teeth that "Germany is not going back to Canossa."

We can afford at this time of day to smile at the high-flown assumption of authority and importanee which characterises the occupants of the Roman See: to-day we need not care very much whether the Pope bans us or blesses us: he may do either according to his own sweet will: we shall not be much the better for the one or much the worse for the other. But it was very different in mediæval times: the excommunication of an individual meant isolation, detestation, neglect, perhaps even death: the excommunication of a country meant that for months or years no religious services were held, no church bells were ever rung, no church doors ever opened, no priests ever seen: the life and the soul of the nation seemed utterly gone;—so dependent was society on the presence and assistance of Holy Church.

The papal ban in the Middle Ages was no light affair, whether applied to the individual, the family, or the nation. For a nation to be excommunicated was the most dreadful of calamities, as both Germany and England had good cause to know. During the excommunication of King John and his kingdom for rebellion against the Pope, no church bell rang, no church door was opened, infants were unbaptized, the dead buried in holes without a prayer, the statues and pictures of the saints were veiled in black, and their relics laid in

penitential ashes on the altar slabs. The year of the papal interdict in England—A.D. 1208, followed by a Bull of excommunication, was a memorable one for England. The form of the Pope's most dreadful curse which John brought down upon himself can still be seen in the ledger-book of Rochester Cathedral, in the custody of the Dean and Chapter, written out by Bishop Ernulphus:

"By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the holy canons, and of the undefiled Virgin Mary, the mother and patroness of our Saviour, and of all the celestial virtues, angels, archangels, throngs, dominions, powers, cherubims and seraphims, and of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and of all the apostles and evangelists, and of the holy innocents, who in the sight of the Lamb are found worthy to sing the new song, of the holy martyrs and holy confessors and of the holy virgins, and of all the saints, and together with the holy and elect of God: we excommunicate and anathematise him or them, malefactor or malefactors, and from the threshold of the holy Church of God Almighty we sequester them that he or they may be tormented, disposed and delivered over with Dathan and Abiram, and with those who say unto the Lord God, 'Depart from us, we desire not to know Thy ways,' and as fire is quenched with water, so let the light of him or them be put out for evermore, unless it shall repent him or them and they make satisfaction. Amen.

"May the Father who created man, curse him or them. May the Son who suffered for us, curse him or them. May the Holy Ghost who was given to us in baptism, curse him or them. May the Holy and Eternal Virgin

Mary, mother of God, curse him or them. May St. Michael the advocate of holy souls, curse him or them. May all the angels and archangels, principalities and powers, and all the heavenly host, curse him or them. May the band or the members of the patriarchs and prophets, curse him or them. May St. John the chief forerunner and baptist of Christ, curse him or them. May St. Peter and St. Paul and St. Andrew and all others Christ's apostles, together with the rest of the disciples and four evangelists, who by their preaching converted the universal world, curse him or them. May the holy and wonderful company of martyrs and confessors, who by their holy works are found pleasing to God Almighty, curse him or them. May the holy choir of the Holy Virgins, who for the honour of Christ has despised the things of the world, curse him or them. May all the saints, who from the beginning of the world to everlasting ages are found to be the beloved of God, curse him or them. May he or they be cursed wherever he or they be, whether in their house or in their field, or in the highway or in the path, or in the wood or in the water, or in the church. May he or they be cursed in living, in dying, in eating, in drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting in sleeping, in slumbering, in waking, in walking, in standing, in sitting, in lying, in working, in resting, in p——, in s——, in blood-letting. May he or they be cursed in all the faculties of their body. May he or they be cursed inwardly and outwardly. May he or they be cursed in the hair of his or their head. May he or they be cursed in his or their brain, and may he or they be cursed in the top of his or their head; in their temples, in their foreheads, in their ears, in their eye-

brows, in their cheeks, in their jawbones, in their nostrils, in their fore teeth or grinders, in their lips, in their throat, in their shoulders, in their wrists, in their arms, in their hands, in their fingers, in their breast, in their heart, and in all the interior parts to the very stomach: in their veins, in the groins, in the thighs, in the genitals, in the hips, in the knees, in the legs, in the feet, in the joints, and in the nails. May he or they be cursed in all their joints from the top of the head to the sole of the foot. May there not be any soundness in him or them. May the Son of the living God with all the glory of His majesty, curse him or them: and may heaven, with all the powers which move therein, all rise against him or them, to damn him or them, unless it shall repent him or them, and that he or they shall make satisfaction. Amen. Amen. So be it."

In addition to the greater excommunication, Pope Innocent III. declared the English throne vacant, and promised Philip of France a free pardon if he would invade England and oust King John. The fear of the French fleet and armies, and his distrust of the loyalty of his own barons and people, whom he had so cruelly alienated, brought him to his knees, and in Dover Cathedral, at the feet of Cardinal Pandulph, the papal legate, he submitted to his castigation, laying down his much-soiled crown, swearing to be the Pope's faithful vassal, and promising to pay as an indemnity 700 merks of silver for England and 300 for Ireland,—some £12,000 sterling, a much larger sum than the income of the King himself.

Here then the old dispute of King *versus* Pope meets us in a most accentuated form. It was an absolute and unconditional surrender of everything to the spiritual

power at Rome. The question which was at the root of the three years' excommunication was really whether the Pope or the King was to have the chief say in the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury,—whether Stephen Langton or John de Gray was to be installed.

The question has long ago been finally settled by the Roman Church, which on more than one occasion has through its officials and official organs declared that England was papal property *in jure*. No one was ever more careful or distinct in declaring the supremacy of the Church over Kings and Emperors than the late Cardinal Manning. In 1874 he foretold a great European war, and hailed it as an occasion of re-establishing the supremacy of the Roman See over all civil States:

"The excited antagonism of the nations is founded on a fact *full of consolations*. Instead of being alarmed or scared or discouraged by the great sharpening of animosity, and the great massing together of antagonists, *I look upon it as the most beautiful sign*. . . . Now, when the nations of Europe have revolted and dethroned the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and when they have made the usurpation of the Holy City a part of international law, *there is only one solution of the difficulty*,—a solution, I fear, impending,—*and that is the terrible scourge of a Continental war*, a war which will exceed the horrors of any of the wars of the First Empire. I do not see how this can be averted." These sentiments are substantially repeated in a sermon on the Allocution, delivered by Cardinal Manning, in which he stated: "I have no desire to be a prophet of evil. For twelve months we have had all the torches of war kindling in the East.

Whatever war is kindled will involve the whole of Europe, and whatever war involves the whole of Europe will involve, as it always has, in Christian history, Italy and Rome. The world, at this moment, under the sway of the Revolution, is being moved to and fro. On the one side are the powers of anarchy and usurpation, and they are all united in desiring that Rome shall continue as it is. On the other side are the people of the Christian and the Catholic world, and the powers of order who believe in God. These two arrays are marshalling and approaching nearer to each other; their collision some day is inevitable."

And again, in a sermon on the same subject, Cardinal Manning remarked: "I must affirm my profound belief that never will Europe return from the watch and ward of an armed camp in which it is seen to-day, with some ten millions of men ready to destroy each other, until it has recognised the superiority of the moral order over material power. And in the day in which the superiority of that moral power is recognised, the Vicar of Jesus Christ will sit once more upon that pacific throne from which he and his predecessors have created and sustained the Christian civilisation of the world. . . . I therefore sum up the whole in these few words: Rome belongs to the Pontiffs because God gave that city to them. Rome belongs to you because you are Catholics, and it is the head of the whole Catholic world. And it is the duty of Christendom to protect that which is the heirloom of the Christian Church, especially in this time of trial, which will surely end in triumph."

The encyclicals and Bulls of Pius IX. in 1873, after the temporal power of the Pope had been curtailed and

the Holy Father reduced to a state of "imprisonment" in the Vatican, are full of the self-same spirit which chastised King John in Dover Cathedral, and triumphed over England until Wycliffe arose and challenged, confuted, and to a considerable extent destroyed it.

In the old statute known as the statute "Circumspecte Agatis," certain things are enumerated which are declared to be "meer spiritual," as to which the King's prohibition doth not lie. These are (1) penance enjoined by prelates for deadly sin; (2) also if prelates do punish for leaving the church unclosed, or for that the church is uncovered, or not conveniently decked, in which cases none other penance can be enjoined but pecuniary; (3) item, if a parson demand of his parishioners oblations or tithes due and accustomed; or if any parson do sue against another parson for tithes greater or smaller, so that the fourth part of the value of the benefice be not demanded; (4) item, if a parson demand mortuaries, in places where a mortuary hath been used to be given; (5) item, if a prelate of a church or of a patron demand of a parson a pension due to him—all such demands are to be made in a spiritual court. And likewise for breaking an oath. In all these cases the spiritual power is declared to have power to take knowledge, notwithstanding the King's prohibition. To certain articles in the shape of interrogatories on this subject, the King answers: That in tithes, oblations, obventions, and mortuaries, when they be pleaded as before is said, the King's probibition doth not lie. And if a clerk or a person religious do sell his corn being in his barn or otherwise to any man for money, if the price thereof be demanded before a spiritual judge, the King's prohibition doth lie; for,

by the sale the spiritual are become temporal, and so tithes pass into chattels. And if debate hang in a spiritual court for the right of tithes, having his original from the right of the patronage, and the quantity of the same tithes do pass the fourth part of the value of the benefice, a prohibition shall lie. Also, if a prelate enjoin penance pecuniary to any man for his sin, if the money be demanded before prelates, a prohibition shall lie.

In 1213, King John of England, after his kingdom had been under this excommunication for three years, pledged himself, if the ban were removed, to make over the realm of England to the Pope, to hold it in vassalage to the Popedom, and in token of this to pay annually £12,000 as rent,—a much larger sum than the income of the King himself. For more than a hundred years this rent was irregularly paid; but in 1366, when Wycliffe steps on the scene, it had not been transmitted for thirty-three years. The seat of the Pope had been removed from Rome to Avignon so as to be under French protection, the reigning Pope being a Frenchman. England having been at war with France, and having beaten her at Cressy and Poitiers, was therefore very loth to owe allegiance to a French Pontiff, much less to forward the annual remittance. Pope Urban v., however, had the effrontery to apply to Edward III. not only for that year's tribute, but for all the arrears. The King's Council discussed the matter: Wycliffe, who as royal chaplain had a place in that council, and who in a tract records the discussion, objected to the payment of anything whatever, on the ground that King John had no right to subject the country to that tax without the consent of Parliament,

and denied the papal claim that Church property was inalienable. The result was that the Council resolved to support the King and to reject the Pope's claim.

Wycliffe wrote a tractate giving an elaborate account of the discussion in the King's Council,—the first existing report of a debate in the Parliament of England, though, of course, not an unbiassed and impartial minute of the transactions,—when seven barons stated reasons against the payment of the tribute. The first, a military baron, appealed to force. "Our ancestors won this realm, and held it against all foes by the sword. Let the Pope come and take his tribute by force, if he can; I am ready to stand up and resist him." The second reasoned on the grounds of true spiritual lordship: "It has nothing to do with feudal supremacy. Christ refused all secular authority; the foxes had holes, the birds of the air had nests, but He had not where to lay His head. Let us bid the Pope to follow his Master, and steadfastly oppose his claims to civil power." The third appealed to the conditions of such a subsidy for service done, and virtually said that the subsidy was not earned by the Roman See: "The Pope calls himself Servant of the servants of the Most High; but what is his service to this realm? Not spiritual edification, but the absorption of our treasure to enrich himself and his Court, while he shows favour and counsel to our enemies." The fourth reasoned from the idea of suzerainty: "The Church estates amount to one-third of this realm; the Pope for these estates is the King's vassal, and ought to do homage to *him*." The fifth argued that "to demand money as the price of John's absolution was flagrant simony; to grant it, therefore, was an irreligious act, especially

at the cost of the poor of the realm." The sixth boldly denounced the bargain as infamous: "If the kingdom were the Pope's, what right had he to alienate it, and that for not a fifth part of the value? Moreover, Christ alone is Suzerain: the Pope, being fallible, may be in mortal sin. Like the kings of old, let Edward hold the realm immediately of Christ." The last took his stand upon the incompetence of John to surrender the realm: "He could not grant it away in his folly; the whole transaction was null and void."

These views of Wycliffe regarding the right of the Pope to levy the subsidy have a double interest, as showing the opposition of a section of Englishmen to Rome as a political and financial machine while loyally upholding her faith and doctrine. The question of doctrine had not yet taken such a hold of Wycliffe's mind: all he fought for at present was the justice of his nation's case and position against the greed of Urban v. The result of the discussion before Edward III. was that the English barons sided with Wycliffe, and the Commons uniting with them, refused point-blank to pay the tribute of 1000 marks annually, declaring unanimously that neither King John nor any other sovereign had power thus to subject the realm of England without consent of Parliament; that such consent had not been obtained; and that, passing over other difficulties, the whole transaction on the part of the King was a violation of the oath which he had taken on receiving his crown." The Parliament further resolved that, "should the Pope commence his threatened process against the King of England as his vassal, all possible aid should be rendered, that such usurpation might be effectually resisted."

It was a remarkably bold step, and had all been right and united at the Vatican, the consequences might have been serious for England. But there was a divided papacy, and a bankrupt sat in the Chair at Rome. Further, England was rapidly becoming consolidated as a nation, and Normans and Saxons were commingling as they had never done before, and the English nation was gradually arising out of the struggles and chaos and darkness of the Middle Ages. England as a great united nation makes its appearance, looking more to the King than to the Pope, and loyal to the national throne rather than to the chairman of an Italian religious syndicate.

Wycliffe's triumph in 1366 in carrying King, barons, Commons, and nation with him, and refusing to pay either in whole or in part any of the tribute which King John had meanly agreed to, without the consent of his barons or people, was the beginning of his unique career as a *persona ingrata* to Rome. He lost papal favour, but he gained the affection of the English Court and people, who thereafter looked upon him as the advocate of their national rights and privileges, and the religious spokesman of the nation's feelings, hopes, and aspirations. John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, the King's third son, became ever after his patron, defender, and friend, and stood by him as Charles v. stood by Luther. Wycliffe took his place as the exponent of the English people's independent and national wishes and desires: in a word, the contest resulted in the nationalisation of England, and the beatification of Wycliffe as the nation's wise guide and independent spokesman.

CHAPTER V

Wycliffe's Mission to Bruges

This high-handed, lofty attitude and act of the Church towards kings and kingdoms—the abject position in which Rome placed all monarchs—"the King," as the common people said, "being nobody but the Pope's man"—opened the eyes of a few thoughtful men to the existence of other abuses; amongst others, to the intrusion of the clergy into all high offices of State—such as Lords Chancellor, Treasurer, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Master of the Rolls: where the Church could work a finger in, it got it in; and the hand followed the finger, and the whole body the hand: the Church required always to have its arm in; and thus it was that almost every State office was in the hands of Churchmen—a state of matters declared by Wycliffe to be unfair and dangerous: —"One priest was Treasurer for Ireland, and another for the Marshes of Calais; and while the parson of Oundle is employed as surveyor of the King's buildings, the parson of Harwich is called to the superintendence of the royal wardrobe." Wycliffe said: "Neither prelates nor doctors, priests nor deacons should hold secular offices; that is, those of Chancery, Treasury, Privy Seal, and other such secular offices in the Exchequer; neither be stewards of lands,

nor stewards of the hall, nor clerks of the kitchen, nor clerks of accounts; neither be occupied in any secular office in lords' courts, more especially while secular men are sufficient to do such offices."

In the course of time this *quæstio vexata* came before Parliament. William Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, gave up the Chancellorship, and all great offices of State were emptied of their ecclesiastical occupants, and laymen put in their place. The same grievance reappears on the eve of the Reformation in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament consisted not of two houses as in England, but commoners and lords, sacred and secular, sat together very much after the manner of the General Assembly of the Scottish National Church to-day. The Court of Session founded by James v. consisted of fifteen judges, seven of them being clergy and seven laymen, while the Lord President was almost always a bishop or an abbot. In the Scottish Privy Council—the officers of State in immediate attendance on the Crown, the Lord Chancellor from 1123–1515 was almost invariably a cleric; while the Lord Chamberlain was generally a layman, but a devoted Churchman. The Lord High Treasurer was sometimes lay, sometimes clerical. But all the chief, the honourable and lucrative offices were held by Churchmen, while in the Scottish Parliament all the bishops and most of the abbots in the land had seats. James v. of Scotland employed clergy in preference to nobility, partly from personal bias and taste, but mainly because he found them better educated than the rough earls and knights of the North, who were more at home on the battlefield than in the council-chamber.

The same fight took place in England in Wycliffe's day, and the result was a temporary defeat of the clerical holders of high offices of State in 1371. Parliament took the matter up and finally removed ecclesiastics from these offices, while the renowned Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, voluntarily gave up the Chancellorship of England.

Further, foreigners were intruded into English benefices — men who spoke another tongue, did not understand that of their flocks, and, if resident in their parishes at all, were so for only a few weeks of the year.

Another gross abuse was that every bishop on being appointed or translated was obliged to transmit his first year's emoluments to Rome; and by one of those clever subtle tricks of which the Church of Rome has so large and varied an assortment, the Pope contrived, on every episcopal vacancy occurring, to translate a large number of the other bishops, if not all of them, from one See to another; and thus he got all their salaries for a whole twelvemonth instead of one salary only. The Pope contrived to get the chief say in all ecclesiastical appointments of importance, and that meant that his friends got the honour, he got the money, and the King got nothing.

In 1350 the Statute of Provisors denied the Pope's claim to dispose of English livings, and in 1353 the "Præmunire" statute made an end of papal Bulls and briefs being carried out without the sanction of the State. The laws were there, but the execution was defective. When, in 1341, Clement IV. had claimed his "right to appoint by provision two of his cardinals to livings in England over 2000 merks *per*

annum, it was felt that such laws were a necessity, and they did good. But still complaints came that papal interferences and exactions were rife. At last, in 1373, a Commission was appointed to put the complaint of the King, nobles, Parliament, and realm of England before the Pope,—Gregory IX., demanding that "the Pontiff should desist in future from the reservation of benefices in the Anglican Church; that the clergy should henceforth freely enjoy their election to episcopal dignities; and that in the case of electing a bishop, it should be enough that his appointment should be confirmed by his metropolitan, as was the ancient custom." Many admirable promises were made by the Pope, but the evils continued, and at last another Commission was appointed, consisting of Gilbert, bishop of Bangor, and Wycliffe was appointed to come to terms with the Pope.

The place appointed for the conference was Bruges, the chief city of Flanders, with its hoary Cathedral of the Holy Saviour and its world-renowned belfry and chimes. The sovereign Counts of Flanders, the Dukes of Burgundy, had their chief home in the "city of bridges," as its name signifies. The reason why Bruges was chosen as the meeting-place between the representatives of England and of the Vatican was that a greater conference was already in progress there, between France and Edward III.'s ambassadors, headed by John of Gaunt, regarding the conclusion of peace between France and England. Consequently, the city was crowded with papal, English, and French dignitaries, and it was a favourable opportunity for a conference on this matter of the intrusion of foreigners into English benefices.

A conference was held at Bruges between France representing the Pope, and England represented by Wycliffe, and Gilbert, bishop of Bangor. The result was that the Pope gave way a little in the matter of benefices, but his claim to be Proprietor and Owner of England (the King being only his tenant and vassal) remained unabated, as it does to this day. Wycliffe was disgusted, and returned from Bruges and the Roman conclave as nauseated as did Luther one hundred and fifty years later from Rome, where he had expected to find peace, love, eternity,—and found in reality strife, hatred, lies, and worldliness.

Though the Bruges Conference was attended by the greatest and wisest, with John of Gaunt and the English ambassadors and the chief continental and Papal dignitaries taking part, the only practical result was a series of letters between the Pope and the English Edward in which some points were yielded, but the papal principle remained unchanged. Wycliffe gained something by the conference, for he and John of Gaunt were even more closely welded together, and with the ageing sovereign and the poor health of the Black Prince this meant a great deal. Above all, Wycliffe's horizon was enlarged, and he learned what Roman methods of argument really were, and what the Holy See really claimed as its divine right. Bruges was to Wycliffe what Rome was to Luther, a place of revelation, and his visit resulted in a firmer conviction of the bold pretensions and far-reaching claims of the papacy, and of its claim of right to do what it liked with lands and hands, souls and bodies.

CHAPTER VI

Rector of Lutterworth

In recognition of his services at Bruges in defending English national rights and privileges as against Roman claims, the King presented him to the prebend of Aust in the collegiate Church of Westbury, in Worcester diocese. A further honour was conferred upon him when he was appointed rector of the sweet parish of Lutterworth, on the borders of leafy Warwickshire and hilly Northamptonshire,—an office which he held for nine years, until his death in 1385. Lutterworth was the quiet forge where were prepared those weapons of ecclesiastical and theological warfare which finally won the day for reformation in England and largely in Europe. Both in his parish and in Oxford he was perpetually lecturing and preaching, his views becoming every day more consolidated and pronounced against various abuses of the Church. His boldness, indeed, considering the fact that in his distinctive religious views he stood pretty much like Athanasius of old, "against the world," was wonderful, and he "began to scatter forth his blasphemies," as a contemporary adversary says of him, with all the more vigour after receiving his degree of doctor from Oxford.

What seems to be the foundation doctrine of

Wycliffe, so far as the relations of civil and ecclesiastical rights were concerned, was what he called "Dominion founded in grace," by which he meant that God was Sole Proprietor of all things and the original Fountain of all authority; and this authority is delegated by Him to earthly stewards on condition that they obey His commands,—the feudal idea of "suzerain," "tenure," and "fief." On this principle both Pope and King are, each in his own sphere, stewards of God, and every Christian is the custodian at any rate of one talent. The Pope is not, therefore, the supreme authority, but God alone,—the first principle of the Reformation.

In 1376 the "good Parliament" was sitting, and possibly Wycliffe may have been a member of it, at any rate Wycliffe's views found abundant expression from its members. Representations were made that the country was groaning under the taxation of Rome, the sum paid to Rome amounting to five times that paid in taxes to the Crown. As to ecclesiastical offices, it was pointed out that unworthy men were promoted, while the pious and dutiful were left in semi-starvation. The introduction of foreigners into Church offices was also laid stress upon, foreign cardinals being made deans and archdeacons in order to draw English revenues,—these revenues going abroad to Roman coffers.

Twenty thousand pounds a year was stated as the sum which the Roman agent received of Peter's Pence in the London office and sent to Rome, he himself residing in the capital in affluence. Every new incumbent had to pay first-fruits to this official, who lived in London in an office "like the Custom-house of a

priest." What was true of the common priest was also true of the bishop, who had to hand over to the Pope the first year's revenne of his See, and thus by an evident trick it was easy to translate several bishops in the course of a year and thus secure the first-fruits of each See to Rome; while the scandal of money-raising actually reached the height of fleecing the English clergy of money with which to procure the ransom of soldiers taken prisoner in the French wars. All of these abuses and scandals Wycliffe exposed and scourged, declaring that "God entrusted the flock to the Holy Father to feed and not to fleece." Whether there be truth or not in the modern description of the methods of the Vatican as "the Pope's shop," it seems pretty clear that England was regarded by the Holy See very much as a harvest-field from which, by hook or by crook, to gather in revenues for itself, without any consideration of the benefits given by or the results springing from such a policy.

Edward III., the conqueror of Cressy and Poitiers, was now old and feeble, and unable to face these weighty matters; but the Church authorities felt that a crisis had arrived in the history of religion in England, and feeling that Wycliffe was the originator of all these reform movements, they finally summoned him to the Convocation of Canterbury in 1377, to be held in St. Paul's Cathedral,—the old St. Paul's, the foundations of which are still traceable around the vast dome which to-day marks the central spot of the Anglican Church.

Wycliffe was summoned to appear in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral on the 19th February 1377, and John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, the

Reformer's trusty friend, resolved to accompany him and see justice done. Lord Percy, the Earl Marshal of England, also attended as a friend of Wycliffe; while many of the nobility of England were present, interested in the brave fight which was being made for the independence and liberties of the nation. Very curiously, in addition to a small company of armed men who accompanied the Duke for the protection of the Reformer, there were also five friars of the mendicant order. An enormous crowd surrounded the doors of the Lady Chapel, and encouraged Wycliffe with such greetings as—"Fear not the bishops, for they are all unlearned in respect of you." Lord Percy and his retinue struggled through the crowd, and when they gained access to the place of meeting, Courtenay, the Bishop of London, turned testily to him and exclaimed, "Lord Percy, if I had known beforehand what masteries you would have kept in the Church I would have stopped you from coming hither"; to which John of Gaunt retorted, "I shall keep such masteries here though you say Nay!"

The trial of Wycliffe took place before Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, Courtenay, bishop of London, a member of the house of Devon, and the other bishops of England; and Lechler describes his personal appearance in these words: "A tall thin figure, covered with a long light gown of black colour, with a girdle about his body; the head adorned with a full flowing beard, exhibiting features keen and sharply cut; the eye clear and penetrating; the lips firmly closed in token of resolution,—the whole man wearing an aspect of lofty earnestness, and replete with dignity and character."

Lord Percy with great boldness told Wycliffe to take a seat, "for you have many things to answer to, and you need to repose on a soft seat"; to which Bishop Courtenay retorted, "It is unmeet that one cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer; he must and shall stand." As usual, the redoubtable John of Gaunt, who had so often stood by the Reformer in perilous times, more especially at Bruges, took Percy's side, and declared, "The Lord Percy's motion for Wycliffe is but reasonable; and as for you, my lord bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride not of you alone, but of all the prelacy in England." "Do your worst, sir," said Courtenay. Heated and angry, John of Gaunt continued, "Thou bearest thyself so brag upon thy family, who shall not be able to help thee: they shall have enough to do to help themselves." "My confidence," replied Courtenay, "is not in my family nor in any man else, but only God, in whom I trust, by whose assistance I will be bold to speak the truth." John of Gaunt's muttered retort was, "Rather than I will take these words at his hands, I will pluck the bishop by the hair out of the Church," —a veiled threat which the crowd overheard, and Courtenay being a general favourite with the populace, resented, the assemblage at once becoming menacing and riotous, and a general brawl took place and the proceedings broke up in confusion. Fresh fuel was added to the fire later in the day—for these lively proceedings took place before nine in the morning—when in Parliament the municipality of London was threatened with humiliation; and fresh riots broke out in the city, during which the houses

both of Percy and of Lancaster were assailed, their arms removed, and a priest was killed at the *mêlée*.

The practical result of the day's doings was nothing at all, as Wycliffe neither heard the charges made against him nor had an opportunity of speaking for his cause; the fierce riot which raged, and which might have gone further had not the bishop reminded them it was Lent, but which very nearly ended in disaster both to Percy and to Lancaster, utterly destroyed all procedure, and all that was done was to dismiss Wycliffe with an injunction not to preach his peculiar doctrines any more. Accordingly he retired to peaceful Lutterworth and resumed his ordinary pastoral care and his studies at Oxford for the great cause which he had espoused. But while Wycliffe went to retirement, his views, principles, and position became more and more popular, and it was generally felt an injustice that he should be looked on with suspicion and dislike if truth was on his side. But so strong was Wycliffe in his character and belief, that while St. Athanasius could write his treatise *Contra Mundum*, the English defender of the primitive faith of Christ could face both earth and the principalities and powers of the unseen with equanimity and content, carrying with him the beautiful sentiment to which he gave utterance in his tract, *De Diabolo et Membris*,—"Christian men should know that whosoever liveth best prayeth best; and that the simple paternoster of a ploughman who hath charity is better than a thousand Masses of covetous prelates and vain religious." Luther in his boast about the tiles of Worms and his hymn of battle against the forces of Antichrist was only Wycliffe revived!

CHAPTER VII

The Papal Ban against Wycliffe

On the 17th of January 1377, the "seventy years' captivity" of the Popes at Avignon came to an end, and Pope Gregory XI. entered the city of Rome in royal state. Now that the divisions and controversies seemed to be coming to a conclusion, the enemies of Wycliffe thought it a good opportunity to prosecute him with renewed zeal, and the English bishops made a strong representation to the Vatican of the harm which the new doctrines were doing, and the necessity for drastic action. Accordingly, five papal Bulls were promulgated on the 22nd of May—declaring in full in nineteen articles the doctrines of Wycliffe, and addressed to the bishops, the University of Oxford, and the King. The bishops are required to make the fullest and most searching inquiry into the matter, and to warn all in authority to use their influence in purging the land of heresy, while in the interval Wycliffe is to be imprisoned during the papal pleasure; and if he should escape by flight he is to be summoned to appear at Rome to answer for his errors. The end of the "Babylonish Exile," as the Italians in derision called the long papal sojourn at Avignon, was now to be celebrated by a great *auto da fé* in which Wycliffe was to be the scapegoat, carrying into the wilderness

the knocks and blows which would otherwise have been expended by contending ecclesiastical dignitaries upon one another.

When Edward III. of England received his copy of the papal Bull against his notorious subject, he was nearing his end, and a month after receiving it, on 21st of June 1377, he passed away after his long reign of fifty years, with its rich memories of Halidon Hill, Creçy, Neville's Cross, Calais, Poitiers, and Bretigny. The Black Prince's son, Edward III.'s grandson, who became Richard II., was twelve years of age, and under the care and tutelage of his widowed mother, the dowager Princess of Wales, a woman of spirit and ability, and rather favourable to Wycliffe's views. The Duke of Lancaster was on the field as well, and no one knew what might take place in the social and ecclesiastical upheavals of the time, and what measure of support the crafty and bold rival might receive from the people.

In October the boy King held his first Parliament, two months after his accession, a Parliament the chief note of which was its patriotism and antagonism to Roman claims. Wycliffe was summoned to its counsels as one who had before upheld the national cause and been the commissioner of princes and the adviser of Parliament. The prolonged war with France occupied much of the attention of this Parliament, especially as a new war with the land of the *fleur-de-lys* seemed imminent; while the oppressive ecclesiastical taxation formed also a main item in the deliberations. It was actually proposed that all foreign ecclesiastics, whether monks or seculars, should be called upon to leave the kingdom, and that their lands and revenues should be

applied to the war against France. This was a national answer to the claims and doings both of France and the Pope, for up till now, and for a considerable time previously, the Popes had been Frenchmen; and naturally all their sympathies being with France, they pressed for the payment by England of the papal tribute and dues, which went to help France to carry on the war against England. The source from which these revenues came, thus became the target of attack by those who received them,—a strange and almost unendurable position.

Wycliffe was asked this question by the Parliament —"Whether the kingdom of England in case of need, for the purpose of self-defence, is not competent in law to restrain the treasure of the land from being carried off to foreign parts, although the Pope should demand this export of gold in virtue of the obedience due to him and under the threat of Church censures." Wycliffe, at the request of the boy King and his Council, drew up the exhaustive and well-reasoned reply, that national treasure may be lawfully retained for the nation's use, as could easily be proved from natural reason, conscience, and Scripture. Gifts to the Roman See were only alms, and alms were only bestowed properly when given to the necessitous, which the Roman See could not reasonably claim to be, as it was far richer than England. Granting that the Pope had these tributes as a moral right, and that England would suffer an interdict such as she had suffered before for opposing and refusing them, how could England's action be justified? "The Holy Father," answered Wycliffe, "would not thus treat his children, especially considering the piety of England; but if he should, it

is one comfort to know that such censures carry no divine authority; and another, that God does not desert those who trust in Him and who, keeping His law, fear God rather than man."

"What claim," asked Wycliffe, "has the Pope to temporal supremacy? It may indeed be claimed by you," he added, "in virtue of some plea, but assuredly by no right or title derived from the apostles. For how could an apostle give unto you that which he did not himself possess?" Wycliffe's strong resistance to the Pope's temporal power influenced Parliament so greatly, that he really led it not only to question the temporal, but even the spiritual authority of the Holy See; but the definite result was that Parliament was prorogued without any definite action being determined upon.

The papal Bull presented to Oxford University had little effect. Wycliffe stood too high in the estimation of Oxford to be in danger there, and the University authorities asked time for consideration; but no action followed. The Bull sent to King Edward III. found him in his grave. The only remaining hope, therefore, of the Pope was in his own prelates in England; and in the Bull addressed to them the supreme Pontifex said that "information had been received from persons truly worthy of credit, that John Wycliffe, rector of Lutterworth in the diocese of Lincoln, and professor of divinity, with a fearlessness the offspring of a detestable insanity, had ventured to dogmatise and preach in favour of opinions wholly subversive of the Church. For this cause the parties addressed are required to seize the person of the offender in the name of the Pope; to commit him to prison; to obtain complete

information as to his tenets; and transmitting such information to Rome by a trusty messenger, they are to retain the arch-heretic as their prisoner until further instructions should be received concerning him." The new Primate of England, Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, summoned Wycliffe to appear before him in the Archbishop's Chapel at Lambeth in April 1378, the special papal commissioners being himself and the Bishop of London. In his defence, Wycliffe went to the palace opposite Westminster Abbey without the guardianship either of Lancaster or Percy, while a great crowd, much more friendly to him than that which had previously crowded the doors of St. Paul's, gathered and forced their way into the chapel, declaring that "papal briefs should have no force in this country without the Royal consent, for in England not the Pope, but the King is master of the house." In his *Church History*, Andrew Fuller declares that "men expected he should be devoured, being brought into the lions' den."

Wycliffe produced a written defence, carefully reasoned out and scholastically argued, vindicating his doctrines point by point. "In the first place," he says, "I protest publicly, as I have often done, that I resolve with my whole heart and by the grace of God to be a sincere Christian; and while life shall last, to profess and to defend the law of Christ so far as I have power. If through ignorance or from any other cause I shall fail in this determination, I ask forgiveness of God, and retracting the errors submit with humility to the correction of the Church. And since the notions of children and of weak persons, concerning what I have taught, are conveyed by others, who are more than

children, beyond the seas, even to the Court of Rome, I am willing to commit my opinions to writing. In my conclusions I have followed the sacred Scriptures and the holy doctors, both in their meaning and in their modes of expression; this I am willing to show: but should it be proved that such conclusions are opposed to the Faith, I am prepared very willingly to retract them."

The nineteen articles of heresy are then reviewed in detail by him. The Pope has no political dominion: his spiritual power is absolute, God only being his judge:—he has no supremacy over the temporal belongings of the clergy or religious houses; the priest's power of binding and loosing—the power of the keys—is only ministerial, and no absolution is worth anything unless it comes from God; neither will excommunication hurt a man unless he has first excommunicated himself before God, for "it is not Church censure but sin that hurts a man," and "neither the Pope nor any other Christian can absolutely bind or loose, but only as he obeys the law of Christ"; and "it seems to me that he who usurps this power must be the Man of Sin." In all probability, however, the boldest thesis of all was that in which he declared that the Pope was not above the Church, but was the servant of, and subject to, the Church. "An ecclesiastic or Churchman," he boldly declared, "even the Pope of Rome may lawfully be corrected for the benefit of the Church, and be accused by the clergy as well as by the laity; for the Church is above the Pontiff; and if the whole college of cardinals is remiss in correcting him for the necessary welfare of the Church, it is evident that the rest of the body, which may chance to be chiefly made up of

the laity, may medicinally reprove him and induce him to live a better life."

Calm and unconcerned, Wycliffe faced the assembly and made his spoken and written defence; and the crowd assembled seemed favourable to him, even though there was no Duke of Lancaster and no Lord Percy to stand by him. Once more the people showed themselves in favour of the cause of reform, and to the dismay of the bishops a tumult was again threatened, when at the supreme moment of difficulty, Sir Lewis Clifford, an officer in the Queen-mother's Court, rushed in and demanded in his mistress' name that no final judgment should at present be given. Sudbury acquiesced, and only warned Wycliffe to cease from spreading his views, and the whole bench of bishops (according to Walsingham) "at the wind of a reed shaken, their speech became as soft as oil, to the public loss of their own dignity and the damage of the whole Church. They were struck with such fear that you would think them to be as a man who hears not, or one in whose mouth are no reproofs."

No cne dared to touch the brave rector of Lutterworth, and he quietly retired unhurt and uncondemned by the Church's highest tribunal in England; and even the promise which the prelates endeavoured to extract from him to abstain from future teaching of his views was not made by him, and accordingly he continued to preach and to teach as formerly.

While the Lambeth Conference was in progress, a larger and more momentous Congress was proceeding in Rome. The death of Gregory XI. removed a part of the scandal of a divided papacy. The conclave assembled to elect his successor was met by a rabble

who demanded a Roman and no more French Pontiffs. The influence of France was strong, and at last in the usual method of compromise an Italian was elected, thus in a measure satisfying both French and Romans by abjuring the representatives of each. Urban VI. began well, and promised to unite Christendom again; but he was a man of strict ascetic character, and wished moral reform all round. He desired a complete reform of the Vatican, and the removal of the sneering taunt that of the Popes it could not be said, "Silver and gold have I none"; and still less the power to say, "Arise and walk"; and the artist's scoff who painted the apostles' faces in the "Last Supper" very red, as "blushing at the lives of their successors." The result was opposition, and every cardinal save one abandoned this papal "man of morals" and established the Avignon papacy, electing a Holy Father from among themselves, who took the name of Clement VII. The great schism of forty years began, and Christendom regarded it in amazement. Wycliffe's observation was, "Now is the Head of Antichrist cloven in twain, and one part contendeth against the other."

CHAPTER VIII

The Friars and the Papacy

The strength and independence of the Roman See was so enormously enlarged by the rise of the independent Franciscan and Dominican friars—the special agents, defenders, and builders of the Roman throne, who by their preaching brought about a reformation within the Church itself, that something more than a mere incidental notice of them seems necessary, especially as one of the great conflicts of Wycliffe's life was with these free, untrammelled servants of the Pope, who raised the spite and ill-will of the regular bishops and clergy, but by their popular gifts and vigorous free-and-easy style of preaching gradually weakened the position of the latter and impoverished their revenues.

In the Dark Ages—*i.e.* for four hundred years after the middle of the fourth century—the practice of preaching from Scripture gradually decayed, and, instead, the *Ethics* of Aristotle, or some other philosopher's moral treatises, were read. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, preaching revived through the influence of the two great orders of monks—the Franciscans and Dominicans, founded respectively by St. Francis of Assisium and St. Dominic. Once when in Rome, St. Francis heard a voice, saying, "Francis, repair My Church which falleth

to ruin"; thereupon he abjured all prospects of worldly advancement, and took upon himself the great task of reviving the Church. "Henceforth," he said, "I recognise no father but Him who is in heaven." This great orator preached without studying, relying upon God; his advice to all his disciples was, "Be short,—for even mediocrity will be forgiven if brevity goes along with it." In this he imitated St. Augustine, some of whose sermons are not more than four to eight minutes long. But though St. Francis did not read many books, he did what was a great deal better, and what a great many bookworms never do, he thought a great deal, and meditated on the works of nature around him, which preached to him first, and whose message, given in a whisper, he gave to the world with full voice and clear utterance and nervous power. He called the earth his mother, and the moon his sister, and said he was related to the winds and the waters, the flowers and the stars; indeed, so intimate was his relation with the objects of nature, that he came actually to believe that they had souls like man; and if the hundred legends about this saint be correct, he even preached to the birds, as St. Antony of Padua, at a later day, did to the fishes, which lifted up their heads out of the water to hear what he had to say.

One or two of these legends may not be wholly uninteresting:—Once drawing nigh to Bevagno, he came to a certain place where birds of different kinds were all gathered together; when the man of God saw them he ran hastily to the spot and saluted them, as if they had been his fellows in reason (while they all turned their heads to him in attentive expectation), and said, "Brother birds, greatly are ye bound to

praise the Creator who clotheth you with feathers, and giveth you wings to fly with, and a pure air to breath, and who careth for you who have so little care for yourselves." The little birds, marvellously commoved, began to spread their wings, stretch forth their necks, and open their beaks, attentively gazing on him; he, glowing in spirit, passed through the midst of them, and even touched them with his robe; yet not one stirred from its place until the man of God gave them leave, when with his blessing and the sign of the cross they all flew away.

When he rejoined his brethren, the simple and pure-minded man began greatly to blame himself for never having preached to the birds before, especially as Scripture said, "Preach the gospel to every creature." He made thereafter, like the author of "The Happy Land," a practice of feeding birds every day, and got to be so well known of them and other animals that they would all come to him when he made his appearance.

On his return from Syria, passing through Venice, vast numbers of birds were singing at the top of their voices; said he to his companion, "Our sisters, the birds, are praising the Creator, let us sing with them." So he began the sacred service; and no sooner did he begin than the birds struck up in opposition, as birds and men will do. Said St. Francis, "Be silent till we also have praised God"; and legend says that at once they ceased their trilling, and did not resume till the saint gave them leave.

Preaching at Aleriano, he could not make himself heard for the chirping of sparrows, which were then building their nests. Pausing in his sermon, he said,

"Sisters, you have talked enough; it is time that I should have my turn. Be silent, and listen to the Word of God"; at which rebuke they ceased, and observed a respectful silence.

Once sitting with his disciple Leo, the song of a nightingale greatly delighted him; he asked Leo to join the bird in singing, but he excused himself for his bad voice, much in the same way as modern artistes plead a sore throat or a tightness in the chest. St. Francis took up the chorus himself, and when he stopped the bird took it up, and so they sang praise until night was far advanced and the saint's voice failed. Then he confessed that a little bird had vanquished him in singing divine praise, and so calling the bird to him, he thanked it for its song, give it the rest of his bread, and, having blessed it, gave it permission to fly away.

Similarly we read of him listening for hours to a grasshopper's song; of his pet lamb, which followed him everywhere, even through the streets of Rome and in the piazza of the Vatican; of his care never to trample on an insect or worm. His love of nature gave a fire to his sermons, which had about them, as all acknowledge, a systematised eloquence which none could resist. Though little read, and no great scholar, the most learned theologian remained silent in his presence. His sermons were always very short; as he said, Christ's discourses were always so, and, besides, "we are not heard for our much speaking either by God or man."

The other great founder of the preaching order was St. Dominic, who when a boy had a vision of St. Peter and St. Paul, the former of whom gave him a staff and the

latter a volume of the Gospel, with the command, "Go, preach the Word of God, for He hath chosen thee for that ministry." These two great preachers had great followers; among the Franciscan preachers of fame are Cardinal Bonaventure and St. Bernardino (1444) of Sienna, whose preaching made enemies rise and embrace each other, caused gamblers to throw away their dice, and women to cast their jewels at his feet. The Dominican order (the name Dominican coming from *Domini canes*, or Dogs of the Lord—from their watchfulness over the Church's interests) boasts the names of Luis de Granada, one of the most powerful orators of any age, whose discourses on Judgment and the Last Day are even at this time thrilling and awe-inspiring; and St. Vincent of Ferraris (1357), a Spaniard like the former, and in temper and style very like the modern Whitfield.

It is part of the philosophy of history that every reformation movement in course of time requires itself to be reformed. The early British and Culdee Churches were superseded by the Roman, having become corrupt; the Roman Church in England and Scotland was superseded by the Reformed, having become corrupt; and so the process of development goes on. The friars were Reformers before the Reformation, not so much in the way of doctrine as of ecclesiastical life, energy, and influence. But for nearly a generation before Wycliffe both Franciscans and Dominicans had become depraved and decayed. The well-known picture of "The Neophyte," in which the youthful monk stands in his stall singing his canticle with eyes lifted up to heaven, while beside him stand big fat friars with gross faces and sensual

expression, is a description in paint of the beginning and the ending of the friars — the roseate hues of early dawn followed by the mist and dimness and fog of a decadent day. The friars of these days were a set of ignorant, self-sufficient knaves, whose aim in preaching was not edification but self-glorification. The mechanical nature of their performances in the pulpit may be judged of from the numerous notes on MS. sermons of that day which have come down to us. On the margin one finds such directions as these for conduct in the pulpit, in monkish handwriting, "Here, sit down"; "Stand up"; "Mop yourself"; "Here, roll your eyes"; "Now, shriek like a devil"; "Shake the crucifix"; "Hammer the pulpit like Satan himself." It was a common practice amongst them on mounting the pulpit to cast a contemptuous glance all round, to show the little esteem in which the orator held his audience, and to make them feel in turn that they were as children in the presence of Omniscience. Very often a boy was concealed in the pulpit to prompt the preacher if he stuck for a word, the pulpit in Roman Catholic cathedrals not being the miserable little barrels in which many have to declaim, the pulpit in the Cathedral of Pisa being capable of holding more than thirty people with the greatest ease. Their sermons bristled with classical and patristic quotations; contained generally a story or two, in which Satan, as a rule, played a prominent part, being in those days a much more distinct personality than he is in the twentieth century. The discourse was divided into heads, and after a point in theology and another in civil law had been raised and laid, the friar descended from the rostrum beaming with self-satisfaction and

self-complacency. These friars were generally men of little education and considerable assurance — who pleased the mob, and certainly pleased themselves. Not to speak of their frequent irreverence and even indecency, the absurdity of some of their sermons strikes us nowadays as intolerable; for example, one of them preaching on the "Book sealed" in the Revelation, began his sermon with a general disquisition on books in general, in which he passed in review almost every book that had ever been written, and then, having wandered from his subject as far as he could, he caught the thread of connection by saying that "these books were not in the least like the book that was sealed," and so on, till at the close of the discourse the audience had heard all,—everything in heaven and earth, except the sealed book which the preacher had proposed for his homily.

The Dominicans and Franciscans swore by their vows to perpetual poverty; but by the same quibble which forbids the Quaker to serve in the wars, but at the same time does not prevent him from giving an antagonist "a friendly fall" which might break every bone in his body, these orders, while individually the brethren could possess nothing, might as corporations hold as much gear as they liked,—lands, houses, forests, hunting-grounds, fisheries, orchards, cattle, wool, cloth. In course of time they became the wealthiest of the wealthy, their lives the most luxurious, and their monastic establishments the most magnificent. The Franciscan order of preachers, who were also known as "Cordeliers," "Grey Friars," or "Minorites" (hence the "Minories" in London), arrived in England about the year 1230, and wore at first a grey, but afterwards a

brown habit, girded with a knotted rope and a black hood,—a habit not unlike that of the Great St. Bernard brothers of to-day in the Alps. The rule required bare feet; but some used sandals, just as the St. Bernard monks wear heavy leather boots. After 1329, Scotland had a separate director-general of the order from England. One of the greatest poets Scotland has ever produced—William Dunbar (*c.* 1465)—was a native of Saltoun, quite near Haddington, and a member of the order of the Grey Friars. The first idea of the Franciscans or Grey Friars was to go to the poorest and most neglected parts of the country and town and infuse Christian ideas. At first their churches were small and plain, and their convents were mere cells of mud and wood, with a ditch round about. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, their churches had become rich and grand, and their monasteries luxurious. Pocock, in his *Repressor*, says (xii. 543): "Some of the lay party blame and hold that religious monasteries, namely, of the Begging Religious, have within their gates and close, great, large, wide, high, and stately mansions for lords and ladies therein to rest, abide, and dwell, and this, that they have large and wide churches, like somewhat to cathedral and mother churches of dioceses." The Franciscans defended themselves for erecting stately churches by urging "so that there be not over great curiosity, greatness, preciousness, or costliness, the more multitude may be received together for to hear therein preaching to be made in rainy days, and be eased in their devotions made to God, while they stand, or sit, or kneel, room for each from other." The argument used in favour of their ample hospitalities

was that there was "mutual benefit to host and guest" by intercourse and helpfulness, whilst the alms and the interest of travellers and passers-by, especially if they were of distinction, were increased by such visits and visitors.

In course of time a reformed branch of the Franciscan order arose under the title of "Conventuals" or "Recollects," and these reformed Franciscans had houses at Berwick, Dumfries, Dundee, Inverkeithing, Roxburgh, Douglas, and Haddington. The Franciscans by a variety of pious frauds endeavoured to absorb the wealth of the land. One original device was to induce people to get buried at death in the habit of the order, as St. Francis once a year descends from heaven to purgatory and delivers the souls of all those who wear the favoured uniform. The result was that multitudes acted on the recommendation, to the great profit of the order.

Another practice was characteristic of the Franciscans,—the kidnapping of children and the shutting of them up in monasteries in order to fill the ranks of the brotherhood, and also provide workers whose labour became highly profitable to the various houses, though at the same time it destroyed the ordinary trade of the neighbourhoods by underselling and cutting of rates.

The Dominicans arrived in England in 1321, and finally succeeded in establishing forty-three houses. Their black cloak and hood gave rise to their popular name, which still is traceable in almost every large town in England and Scotland — "Black Friars." There were two sections of the Dominicans—one went forward to convert heretics, and the other by the power of the Inquisition to slay them. These two bands, the Pope's special defenders and assistants,

formed a powerful army which menaced the liberties of the people both negatively and positively—sucking up the richness and substance out of the lands on which they settled, and actively attacking any adversary of the Holy See and bringing him to a strict account. After the advent of the Dominicans, the novelty of their preaching excited widespread interest and gave them great influence, and ultimately enormous wealth. Their noble London minster is described in *The Vision of Piers Plowman*—"with pillars ypaint and polished full clene and queyntly corven with curious knottes, and shining windows wel ywrought wyde up alofte, and in the arches fairly carved, and crochettes in corners with knottes of gold." He describes the great cross, the private posterns, the orchards and arbours, and then the cloisters, etc.:

"Then came to that cloister and gaped abouten
How it was pillared and paint and pourtrayed well clean
All y-heled [covered] with lead low to the stones,
And y-paved with peyntil [tiles] each point after other,
With conduits of clean tin, closed all about
With lavers of latten lovely y-greithed [adorned].

Then was the chapter-house wrought as a great church
Carven and covered and quaintly entailed
With seemly cielure y-set on loft
As a parliament house [the chapter-house of Westminster]
y-painted about.

Then fared into Frater, and found there another
An hall for an high king, an household to holden,
With broad boards abouten, y-benched well clean
With windows of glass wrought as a church.
Then walked further and went all-abouten,

And saw halls full high and houses full noble,
Chambers with chemneys and chapels gay,
And kitchens for an high king in castles to holden.
And their dortor y-dight [provided] with doors full strong,
Firmary and Frater with fele [many] mo[re] houses,
And all strong stone wall stern [level] upon height
With gay garret and great, and each hole y-glazed,
And other houses even to harbour the queen."

[Wright, ii. 309; Wharton, ii. 138.]

The great Black Friars monastery thus elaborately described must have been a magnificent structure, although nowadays the district is associated with a Thames Bridge, a London street, and a metropolitan railway station with its sounds and smells.

The Dominicans were early introduced into Scotland by King Alexander II., who, when in Paris, saw St. Dominic, and begged him to send some of his preachers to Scotland to teach the people. It is said the King founded eight houses for these Black or Preaching Friars, who wore a thick black worsted cope over a kirtle of clean white linen, a black, afterwards a brown hood, a white scapular, and boots. Bishop Clement of Dunblane received the kirtle from St. Dominic himself. Traces of their presence can be found all over Great Britain in the Blackfriars streets and places and districts, if, indeed, parts of the fine old buildings are not still standing. Only a century ago or so the beautiful gardens and gilded arbour or Monk's Tower, richly painted with the seasons and the Virtues and Vices, from which King Robert viewed the combat of the thirty rival clan-champions, were in evidence at Perth, where a splendid minster was raised by the Dominicans, who also had fine houses

at St. Ninians [Stirling], St. Monance, Wigtoun, Montrose, Linlithgow, Dysart, Elgin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Ayr, Berwick, Cupar-Fife, and elsewhere. In England their houses were extraordinarily numerous, and latterly magnificently equipped and extravagantly conducted.

Events favourable to the spread of Wycliffe's influence in the country followed each other with rapid succession. The stormy Lambeth Synod had ended in smoke, and the people were, on the whole, favourable to the earnest, brave rector who first thought out his religious, ecclesiastical, and social theories on the sweet banks of the Swift, from which, lower down, in leafy Warwickshire at Stratford-on-Avon, the great world-voice of Humanity's dramatist spoke two hundred years later, and then in the busy haunts of scholars and politicians and warriors, spoke them out with no uncertain sound. But the state of affairs at Rome — at the very headquarters of the papacy, was such as to enfeeble and lower the entire life and vigour of the Church. It was bad enough in a conflict between France and Italy as to which nation should have the honour of providing Christendom with a Holy Father, to have the Chair of St. Peter moved from Rome to Avignon, and to have the Head of Christendom passing a seventy years' Babylonish captivity there; but it was infinitely worse to have a Pope at each place, and this was actually the case when Wycliffe in 1378 renewed his reforming efforts, and attacked the Church's ill-gotten and ill-administered treasure, and the vices, follies, and luxury of the Black and White Friars.

Gregory XI. died on 27th March 1378, and the

cardinals assembled to elect his successor. The angry Roman rabble demanded an Italian Pope and no Frenchman, and the cardinals elected an Italian—the Archbishop of Barri, who took the name of Urban VI. The Roman populace demanded a Roman, and French interest was also strong in the sacred college; but the compromise by which neither a Roman nor a Frenchman but an Italian received the tiara, seemed likely to give general satisfaction. Urban was, however, an ascetic, severe in his rule and methods, intolerably haughty, and infinitely vain. It was not long till his cardinals turned against him, and finally, with one exception, they declared his election null and void, having been made under intimidation; and foregathering at Fondi, one of the endless townships which fringe the most beautiful bay in the world, they elected at Naples another Pontiff, who was proclaimed Clement VII., and established his Court at the old Babylonish retreat of Avignon.

The extraordinary vision was thus presented to Christendom of a divided papacy, of two Vicars of Christ, one at Rome and one at Avignon. For half a century this dreadful schism lasted, to the scandal of the Christian world. "Now," said Wycliffe, "is the Head of Antichrist cloven in twain, and one part contendeth against the other."

The event was a catastrophe for the Church—the greatest since the final separation between East and West, and gave a shock to the religious sentiment of Europe. Endless contentions and wars between the partisans of the rival Popes took place, and under the strain, and with the example before them in the highest places, the ordinary clergy sank into depravity

and corruption, and in their hopelessness, as with the lepers in the Holy Land, consoled themselves with sin upon sin. The people followed next, and were either overwhelmed with doubt as to their relationship to the Head of the Church, or degenerated into unbelief and indifference. History—"that Mississippi of falsehoood" as it has been called—is very silent as to the spiritual and social horrors of that age, but the silence is eloquent, as eloquent as the silence of the monastic records during times of long-protracted peace. Wycliffe at this crisis, which deeply affected him, delivered his soul on the subject in his tract *On the Schism of the Popes*, and pointed out how the hierarchy being divided against itself could only have the result of upsetting all good order among clergy and people. "Emperors and Kings," he says, "should help in this cause to maintain God's law, to recover the heritage of the Church, and to destroy the foul sins of clerks, saving their persons. Thus shall peace be established and simony destroyed."

While these momentous events were happening on the Continent, Wycliffe was sowing beside the peaceful waters which ripple past Lutterworth on their way to the far-off sea. Busy as a pastor, he preached constantly—sometimes in Latin, but to his own parishioners in homely English. Nearly three hundred of his village sermons remain. Besides visiting the sick, the aged, and the dying, whether freeman or slave, with all the devotion of Chaucer's good priest, his pen was busy with his translation of the Bible into homely English,—the great work of his life spreading over several years,—with which he hoped amid the many discordant voices of the age to sound

forth over England the true note of the gospel-trumpet. If ecclesiastical powers fail and disappoint, a glory still gilds the sacred page, and that to him was enough. He issued at this time his work on *The Truth and Meaning of Scripture*, and maintained the supreme authority of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the sufficiency of Christ's Law to rule Christ's Church without any Vicar of Christ or infallible Pontiff to interpret it.

But his attack on the friars is the most outstanding event in his public life at this time, and he entered into it with characteristic zest and spirit, declaring that the split in the papacy had taken place "in order that in Christ's name, they may the more easily overcome them both." In these circumstances he vigorously assailed the Black and Grey Friars, who, he declared, were sucking the country of its wealth and resources.

The dislocation of papal rule was favourable to the spread of Wycliffe's views and doctrines, for the death of Gregory XI. made his Bulls invalid unless his successor renewed them, and Pope Urban had too much to do in the way of conserving the rights of Rome as against Avignon to think very much of anything else. Wycliffe accordingly recommenced his crusade, and for three years he prosecuted his work unmolested and with increasing knowledge and deepened convictions. The Church's property received again his attention and criticism, and he proposed to King and Parliament a scheme for the complete reform of the entire ecclesiastical estate. The treasure of the Church was, according to Canon Law, inalienable, and to deprive her of anything in kind or money was

sacrilege. The Church property was free of all taxes and public burdens; and while a voluntary subsidy might in time of emergency be given by the Church, no taxes or legal burdens rested on her. The Church's very wealth became her snare, and Wycliffe complained of the pride, indolence, and luxury of Churchmen. His doctrine, which created an enormous flutter in ecclesiastical circles, was that as the Church's treasure had come to her neither by purchase nor conquest, but by gift and free-will offering for specific religious purposes, so she was really only the administrator of a great and a sacred trust, and the nation, King, and Parliament were bound to see that she fulfilled the conditions under which that treasure had been given. Evil conduct cancelled the use of these gifts either in individuals or in the Church generally. If the Church failed to do her duty, she then failed to deserve the benefits which pious forefathers had secured for her.

In this connection more especially he attacked the wealthy Franciscan and Dominican Friars, and as on former occasions showed up their greed, luxury, indolence, and even vice. The "voluntary humility" of these orders he declared was a farce. These evils had already been complained of by loyal and leading Churchmen themselves, notably by Grossetête the bishop of Lincoln, and Fitzralph the archbishop of Armagh, while in the *Canterbury Tales*—notably in the "Pardoner," Geoffrey Chaucer held up to mockery the wandering friars who went from county to county and parish to parish, ignoring the parish priests, and not only doing their work, but absorbing their emoluments, to the enormous loss of the latter, whose com-

plaints were neither few nor feeble. The "mendicant orders," including not only the Black and Grey Friars, but the Carmelites or White Friars and the Augustinians or Austin Friars, could celebrate Mass anywhere, preach, hear confessions, grant pardons, and, in fact, were serious rivals to the stated, placed, parochial clergy. As a result, their original methods and brazen boldness realised their ends, and wealth flowed into their coffers. Not only were the parochial priests thus deprived of functions and emoluments, but the universities themselves suffered greatly, as the valuable posts were one by one seized by the friars, who became also lecturers; and young men in large numbers were induced to forsake their employments and take the vows of St. Francis or St. Dominic. Following this, parents would not send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge lest they should be led away; and the number of students diminished alarmingly, notwithstanding University Statutes of all kinds enacted against the friars' incursion.

The early Franciscans and Dominicans were men of holy fire and divine enthusiasm, and produced a reformation inside the Church second only to that of Luther. At first, in token of humility they begged their bread—an act, especially for men of pride and birth, of extreme self-crucifixion; in later times they begged with vigour, not to crucify, but to enrich themselves. And thus it was that a poor penniless order, owning nothing in the wide world but a habit, a staff, and a pair of boots, became enormously wealthy, founded religious houses which for dignity and wealth eclipsed those of the monastic orders, ousted the regular clergy from their places, absorbing their

functions, especially the profitable ones of pardoning and absolving, and ended by completely superseding them in all rich and valuable posts in the universities. Finally, they obtained so much power and influence in the country, that from being nothing and possessing nothing, they became dangerously rich, alarmingly powerful, and hopelessly lazy.

Had they even given any substantial return to the community, however trifling, for the vast sums of money they absorbed,—for the broad lands they monopolised,—the burden would perhaps have been tolerable; but, unlike the monkish orders who, though not without their faults, made their religious houses the schools, the asylums, the hospitals, the poorhouses of the country—making the care of the destitute their special business, and who, when that debased monarch Henry VIII. scattered them and greedily grasped at their revenues, were sadly missed by the thousands and thousands of poor miserables turned adrift without a friend in the world. On the other hand, the Black and Grey Friars took everything and gave nothing: they had even given up their preaching to a great extent, for which they had from the Pope a roving commission; and were simply a dead weight on the country. So that, what with the Pope's annual tribute for himself and the friars' wholesale greed and grasping within, the country ran a great risk of being utterly impoverished and rendered hopelessly bankrupt.

Wycliffe was at this time living partly at Lutterworth and partly at Oxford: severe illness brought on by trial and hard work came upon him. The friars venturing to his beside, on one occasion, adjured him

to revoke his errors. Wycliffe listened to them quietly till they had their breath quite out. Then, beckoning to a servant to help him to sit up in bed, he looked steadily at his cowled and sandalled visitors, and then suddenly scared them out of reason, so that they were thankful to beat a hasty retreat, by crying out at the top of his voice—"I shall not die but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars."

CHAPTER IX

Wycliffe's Lollards, Bible and Tracts

With a view to counteract the influence of the friars, Wycliffe next resolved upon a positive movement, and instituted an order of "poor preachers"—whose vows were not in name but in reality those of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These were chiefly Oxford graduates trained by Wycliffe himself, and sent by him all over the land to preach a plain and simple Christian faith. Their commission was to preach the gospel; not to dispense pardons or celebrate Masses for the living or the dead, but simply clothed with russet cloak, barefooted, and staff in hand, to tell the message of the Cross in the towns and villages of Britain. They came afterwards to be called Lollards, and their influence stretched all over England and even to the lowlands of Scotland; and their simple preaching was eagerly listened to by the people, to whom the preaching of a simple gospel was a novelty. The preaching friars gave as their discourses a hash of ecclesiastical, legendary, and classical lore not unmixed with unseemly if not profane jocularities, and always ending with a strong appeal for filthy lucre—a kind of discourse which in time became monotonous and stale. The simple Lollards, on the other hand, versed in the simple life of Christ, and profoundly impressed

with a sense of His love for sinners and of the suitability of the gospel of love and peace for the world, went from town to town and from village to village preaching to the populace. If forbidden the use of the parish churches, as they generally were, they went to the churchyards; one of them on one occasion making a pulpit of two millstones in the High Street of Leicester, and there preached to an immense multitude, in defiance of the bishop. A favourite place for their services was under the old oak-trees which from the remotest times have been characteristic of the peaceful village greens of Old England, some of these old oak monarchs still surviving, though much decayed, and called to this day "Gospel Oaks." "Go and preach," said Wycliffe often to his disciples, "it is the sublimest work. After your sermon is ended, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind, and the lame, and succour them according to your ability."

These russet-robed preachers, who received the name of Lollards either from the low singing tones in which they spoke, or because they were "heretical tares," survived for more than a century and a half in England: they spread to the North, and were to be seen at times in the High Street of Edinburgh: they were found even on the Continent, and had at last a settlement in Bohemia, where they survived for many years, and finally joined themselves to the followers of John Hus, the famous Bohemian Reformer.

During these years of active life and strenuous strife Wycliffe was in his quiet hours steadily proceeding with his English Bible, regarding which a fuller account will be given later on. Other works of divinity belong to this period,—works which were

no doubt in the main the summaries of his lectures in Oxford University. His *Summa Theologiæ*, or general body of divinity, is probably the gist of his theological teaching in Oxford. But probably the most remarkable and characteristic work of this time was his *Trialogus*,—a series of discussions between the three advocates—Truth, Falsehood, and Wisdom. It is a dialectic treatise on the central Roman dogma of Transubstantiation, which he absolutely and finally rejects. In his other divinity works of this period he is seen gradually drifting towards this final refusal to accept the dogma, more especially in his lectures delivered in 1381, which were regarded as a challenge to the Church, and evoked from the Chancellor and twelve doctors of Oxford University a counter-appeal in which Wycliffe's errors are thus summed up: "1. That in the sacrament of the altar the substance of material bread and wine do remain the same after consecration that they were before. 2. That in that venerable sacrament the body and blood of Christ are not essentially nor substantially nor even bodily, but figuratively or topically, so that Christ is not there truly or verily in His own proper Person." The Church's counter-statement concludes with a strongly-worded admonition to the faithful to avoid these heresies:—"The Chancellor admonishes and very strictly inhibits that no one for the future, of any degree, state, or condition, do publicly maintain, teach, or defend the two aforesaid erroneous assertions, or either of them, in the schools or out of them, in this University, on pain of imprisonment and suspension from all scholastic exercises, and also on pain of the greater excommunication."

Wycliffe, like Luther, posted up in Oxford twelve theses denying transubstantiation, and challenged the world to prove its truth. "The consecrated Host," he says in one of them, "which we see upon the altar is neither Christ nor any part of Christ, but an efficacious sign of Him." The Chancellor of Oxford University, William Barton, was assisted in his defence of the Church's doctrine by four secular doctors and eight monks, and finally an officer was despatched to the School of the Augustinians in which Wycliffe was lecturing to his students on the Eucharist, and read to him the sentence of condemnation.

For the moment he was taken aback by the suddenness of the summons, and then recovering his composure, he said—"You ought first to have shown me to be in error," and thereupon he challenged the authors of the counterblast to refute his published opinions. He was then told that there were only two alternatives for him,—either to be silent or to be imprisoned,—to which he replied—"Then I appeal to the King and the Parliament." He rose from his professor's chair, which he was never to occupy again, and quietly withdrew to his beloved Lutterworth.

A great political crisis came to England in 1381, in which the people, oppressed by long and heavy taxation, led by Wat Tyler, rose up and marched upon London. John Ball, who had been preaching for twenty years before the institution of Wycliffe's "poor priests," associated himself with the rising, himself a priest of dissolute habits and poor reputation, holding strong communistic views; and a determined attempt was made by the Church

authorities to associate him with Wycliffe and the Lollard teaching. Arrived in London, this great socialistic crowd was joined by the scum of the city, and there were angry threatenings of revolution, "red ruin, and the breaking up of laws." The Duke of Lancaster's great palace in the Savoy was burned down, and Archbishop Sudbury, the Primate, who also held the office of Lord Chancellor of the kingdom, was beheaded in the Tower. Stern repressive measures were taken by the Government, and Wat Tyler's communistic rising was quelled and the leaders were with hundreds of followers executed.

At once Wycliffe's name was mentioned in connection with the rising, though the insurrectionists had all along expressed their sympathy with the mendicant friars who were his enemies. But the ecclesiastical authorities thought it a great opportunity to crush Lollardism through associating it with the base and revolutionary movement of Tyler and Ball, and accordingly the new archbishop, Courtenay, bishop of London, who succeeded the murdered Sudbury, at once instituted proceedings against the Reformer. Courtenay was translated to Canterbury by a Bull of Urban VI., the Roman Pope, and being thus promoted for his attachment to the Roman claimant to the Vicarage of Christ, he was particularly anxious to prove his devotion to his benefactor by stamping out the new heresy.

In the spring of 1382, Wycliffe presented his appeal from the Chancellor of Oxford University to the King in Council and to Parliament. Lancaster, foreseeing evil to his old friend, advised him to refrain from attacking the doctrine of the Church. So long

as Wycliffe attacked abuses and lowered the pride and diminished the wealth of the Church, Lancaster was with him, but he would not follow him into an attack on the Church's creed. But it was of no avail. Wycliffe declared his disbelief in transubstantiation and other Roman dogmas, and stated it as his belief that a third of the clergy of England were with him. As for himself, he was prepared to die rather than recant. In *The Wicket*, a simple explanation in plain English of the Lord's Supper, he violently repudiated the literal interpretation of Christ's words—"This is My body." Other tracts and books followed in quick succession from the busy study at Lutterworth. He argued after the manner of the mediæval Schoolmen at one time, and at another stated his convictions in clear, direct, incisive language which he that ran could read. Nothing would make him alter his convictions nor lessen his attachment to the Scriptures in their plain and natural meaning.

The famous trial then came. Courtenay was installed into the chair of St. Augustine at Canterbury on 6th May 1382. On the 17th of the same month the Primate summoned a council of prelates and divines at the Blackfriars' monastery in London, the memory of which still lingers in the place-names of the district,—a council which from the extraordinary event which broke in upon its deliberations has ever since received the name of the "Earthquake Synod." Eight prelates, fourteen doctors, six bachelors of divinity, fifteen mendicant friars, and four monks were gathered in the great hall of the monastery, and were just about to proceed to Wycliffe's trial, when

an earthquake shook London, to the terror of the assembled divines, who began to take it as an omen of the divine displeasure. But the Primate, who was in deadly earnest to have Wycliffe condemned, turned the incident to another account, and, improving the occasion said—"Know you not that the noxious vapours which catch fire in the bosom of the earth and give rise to these phenomena which alarm you, lose all their force when burst forth? In like manner, by rejecting the wicked from our community we shall put an end to the convulsions of the Church."

Accepting gratefully the archhishop's interpretation of the earthquake incident, the members of the court proceeded to the trial, though Wycliffe naturally regarded the earth tremors as portents of God's anger at the prevailing errors, and it was he who ever afterwards spoke of the assembly as the "Earthquake Council."

A court officer read out the twenty-four heretical propositions from Wycliffe's writings, and after deliberations extending over three days the council condemned ten of them as heretical and the rest as erroneous. The first three propositions related to the Lord's Supper and the denial of the Real Presence,—Wycliffe doctrines which had already been banned. The conclusions of the council were publicly declared with great show of ceremony. A procession of clergy and laity marched from Blackfriars up Ludgate Hill to St. Paul's Cathedral, where John Cunningham, a Carmelite monk, preached a sermon against the Lollard doctrines, and concluded by reading the twenty-four condemned articles of belief, and called for instant judgment and punishment

upon all who preached, taught, or believed these heresies.

The council's sentence was served upon the Bishop of London, a diocese almost as much infected with the new views as Oxford itself, to all the bishops, and more particularly to the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese Lutterworth was situated. Another copy was sent to Oxford, and Crown, and Parliament were called upon to take action.

Archbishop Courtenay's commissioner at Oxford delivered the message to the University, which at heart was always favourable to its distinguished son, with the result that nothing was done. Richard II., the youthful King, was told by Courtenay—"If we permit this heretic to appeal continually to the passions of the people, our destruction is inevitable: we must silence these Lollards." Anxious to propitiate the Church, mainly for financial ends, the King gave orders "to confine in the prisons of the State any who should maintain the condemned propositions." The House of Lords approved of this action, not so the House of Commons; and yet in spite of the motion having never received the authority of the Commons, through Courtenay's great influence and subtle diplomacy the condemnatory ordinance was placed upon the Statute Book on 26th May 1382.

Courtenay attained his end, and now prepared to crush Wycliffe and his followers. Lancaster faltered and failed, and many who had supported the Reformer in his crusade against the friars and the corruptions of the Church shrank from committing themselves so far as to deny the Real Presence. On 19th November

1382, Parliament reassembled, and Wycliffe, who knew his life was in hourly danger, appealed to it and to the King. He reiterated four grievances which called loudly for reform,—the monastic orders, which ought to be abolished,—the lawfulness and righteousness of secular lords taking away Church property which was abused,—the withdrawing of revenues from evil-living clerics,—and the teaching of the scriptural doctrine of the Eucharist as against Transubstantiation, in the churches of the land.

The Commons looked favourably on the appeal, and asked the King to disannul the persecuting mandate which Courtenay had obtained, and further declared with great boldness that the papal prelates would no more override and overrule their wishes than in the days of King John. With great wisdom the King withdrew the mandate and repealed it.

In angry despair the Primate turned to Oxford, where both Parliament and Convocation were assembled, and with great astuteness mixed up the Crown's clamant want of money and Wycliffe's heresies. "Our business," he said, addressing Convocation, "is to grant a subsidy to the Crown and to remedy certain disorders which have too long disgraced the University, and are rapidly extending to the whole community of whose spiritual safety we are the properly constituted guardians." The meeting of Convocation to which Wycliffe was summoned was attended by all the dignitaries and students and public of the city by the Isis, besides six prelates and a host of titled divines.

Oxford had always been loyal to the earnest scholar who forty years before had begun his studies in its

halls, and now he was arraigned and put on trial for heresy before his very friends and patrons. Lancaster, afraid of further mischief, advised him to submit; but Wycliffe turned to Courtenay, and after boldly reproaching him for allowing priests to sell their Masses and thus disseminate error, added—"The Truth shall prevail!" He passed out from the great gathering, none daring to touch him, and leaving Oxford hastened to peaceful Lutterworth once more; and till his death he never suffered any more trouble nor was brought to any fresh trial.

As on previous occasions, however, when the dangerous man had, disappeared the judges had their harmless revenge and bootless wrath and clamour. Wycliffe and his adherents, notably Nicholas Hereford who assisted him in the translation of the Bible, were deprived of all university functions and expelled from university and city. The very persecution seemed to spread the Wycliffe movement, so much so that a Roman Catholic writer declared in the oft-quoted sentence—"A man could not meet two people on the road, but one of them was a disciple of Wycliffe." The persecution which ensued drove some back to their former views; but Wycliffe resumed his studies on the shore of the Swift, and prepared for the completion of the greatest work of his life, upon which he had already spent many years of toil and his whole heart's-blood—the translation of the whole Bible into English.

Wycliffe was the author not only of a *Sum of Theology*, *Three Treatises against the Friars*, *The Wicket* (a tract on the Lord's Supper), *The Poor Caitiff* (a book on practical personal piety), but also of many contro-

versial treatises on the more objectionable documents of the Church of Rome, in which she had departed from the universal teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church of God. When all these have been forgotten, however, as in time they will and must be,—when the Reformer's influence and doings shall have dropped behind the horizon of time into the deep ocean of oblivion,—the one great masterpiece of his life will remain and perpetuate his memory as long as time shall last. That work is his translation of the Bible into English,—the first translation of the Scripture into the people's tongue that had ever been made in this land.

The only Bibles in existence were the hand-written scrolls of the Latin Vulgate, a copy of which was a fortune in itself, a large flock of sheep being oftentimes given in exchange for a single page: to transcribe copies of the Vulgate was considered a work of the greatest merit, and sure to secure an entrance into glory. Of course, these Latin Bibles were quite out of the reach of the people, and were to be found only in the possession of the parish priest, who alone could understand the language. There were, it is true, small portions of the New Testament in English: even so early as the sixth century the Venerable Bede rendered the Gospel of St. John into Anglo-Saxon; but Wycliffe was the first to give the English people the complete copy of Holy Scripture in the native tongue, and to let the common people read with their own eyes the priceless words of everlasting life.

The New Testament was the work of Wycliffe alone: the Old Testament was translated by his friend Nicholas Hereford and his Lutterworth curate, John

Purvey. The translation is not from the original Hebrew and Greek, but only from the Latin Vulgate, and is thus only a translation of a translation. It is, however, fairly accurate; and not only did it give ordinary people the Bible into their own hands, but it fixed the English language, and gave it a firmness and consistency which it had never possessed before. That Bible became the standard of pure and correct English writing and speaking, and was thus not only a potent religious teacher, but a splendid popular educator.

To multiply copies, Wycliffe got his Oxford students and friends to co-operate with him, and thus in time they were scattered through the whole land,—to so great an extent, indeed, that in 1850, when a census was taken of the number of written copies in existence, no less than a hundred and fifty MSS. were found to have survived the wreck of centuries.

At this time of day we can hardly estimate the difficulties of such an undertaking as this: there was the heavy opposition of the Church to the popularising and vulgarising of the priests' sacred book: there was the entire absence of printer's press and printer's ink, and the like,—only the human hand and the slowly moving pen: these and a hundred other difficulties the brave spirit of John Wycliffe faced and overcame; and thus he was the forerunner of all the later translators—the great progenitor of the English Bible of to-day, the great treasure of the British people.

CHAPTER X

Wycliffe's Death

But the sword was too sharp for the scabbard; the spirit was too active for the frail tabernacle: Wycliffe had worked, now Wycliffe must rest. On 28th December 1384—five hundred and twenty-three years ago, while conducting service in his own beautiful church at Lutterworth, he was struck down with paralysis and never spoke again, passing peacefully away to the other world on New Year's eve, just as the old year was a-dying. Reverently his parishioners laid his wearied bones to rest in the quiet churchyard; but thirty years later, by command of the Council of Constance, they were exhumed, burned to ashes, and the dust tossed into the river Swift,—a quickly running stream which surges past the old parish church; and thus, as "old Fuller" says, "This brook did convey his ashes into the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

The bones of Columbus have been shifted all over the New World and the Old. And poor Mary's ashes had a fate like her own life: the cruel tragedy of her life ended by the fatal stroke at Fotheringay, her remains were first interred in Peterborough Cathedral,

and thence brought by James I. with great solemnity to Westminster Abbey, where she lies to-day with a marble effigy above her, hands folded in prayer, and at her feet the Scottish lion crowned. Truly in reviewing such a life of mingled sunshine and shadow, grey and gold, one is constrained to cry out like the great French preacher over the bier of Louis XIV., "There is nothing great but God!"

The fine old church dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, where Wycliffe ministered so long, is still used as the parish church to-day,—a fine Gothic tower having been erected in place of the ancient spire, which had fallen to decay. The glorious nave and chancel, with their rich, rare old carvings and groinings, the dense masses of wood and forest, the bright green flowery meadows, and the sparkling happy river Swift with its pebbly beach, are all there to-day just as he left them five hundred years ago. In the vestry there are still shown his old chair, a bit of his gown, and a considerable portion of the original pulpit. The inscription on the Memorial Tablet says: "He found an abundant reward in the blessings of his countrymen of every rank and age, to whom be unfolded the words of eternal life."

The Rev. F. C. Alderson, rector of Lutterworth and canon of Peterborough, kindly writes as to the present memorials to Wycliffe in Lutterworth:

"The Relics in the Church consist of a portion of Wiclif's *cope* that I think is probably a true relic, unless it is a portion of the Altar cloth, as some say.

"Then there are his *candlesticks*, which probably were those put into the Church by the order of Archbishop Laud, but they are called 'Wiclif's Candlesticks.'

"Then there is the copy of his *portrait*, which is not probably of him.

"Then there is his *chair*, on which he is said to have died, but I cannot myself certify this.

"And, lastly, there is his *pulpit*, some of the woodwork being undoubtedly of his time.

"But I think, though the Church has been restored, that the arcade of the Nave was probably built about his time, and there are *two Frescoes*, one of the Judgment Day, and the other of three persons, probably Richard II., Anne of Bohemia, and John of Gaunt, that I assume were in the Church in Wiclif's time. Some of the Church is older than Wiclif, and some part of it is later.

"There are two modern monuments, one inside the Church—Wiclif sending out his preachers, and there is a large obelisk at the entry of the town."

Alas, since this was written Canon Alderson has passed to his rest!

Mr. Edward Caird, until recently Master of Balliol, kindly informs me that the only "trace" of importance of Wycliffe's presence at the famous college for northmen is "a portrait of questionable authenticity."

CHAPTER XI

WYCLIFFE AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE [1]

THE beauty of many of the magnificently illuminated Gospels of early and mediæval British Christianity raises the envy and wonder of the modern artist and scribe. In Durham Cathedral and in the British Museum wonderful examples of the labours in the scriptorium of the Lindisfarne fathers are to be seen. The "Durham Manuscript" in the British Museum (Nero. D., 4), intimately described by Selden, Mareschall, Smith, Wanley, and Astle, is a copy of the four Gospels written by Eadfrith or Egfrid, bishop of Lindisfarne. The Vulgate is there beautifully transcribed and bound in gold and jewels. A note at the end of St. Matthew says Egfrid wrote it, and Ethelwald his successor did the brilliant and wondrous illuminations. Ælfrid put it in a cover of gold and silver with rich stones, and after a time Aldred added an interlinear Dano-Saxon version with notes on the margin. That priceless volume was the treasure of the island-college of Lindisfarne until the Danes pillaged the place as they pillaged the sister Iona, and the fathers fled, carrying their sacred gospel-book with them,—a volume as priceless and wonderful to them as was the "Crystal book" of Columba to the Iona missionaries. During their flight the book fell into the sea, and it is said one

[1] See note on p. 324.

of the fathers had a vision of it thrown up unhurt on the rocky coast. After due search it was found where the dream indicated. At last it was laid in Durham, where it remained until Lindisfarne was rebuilt and safe, and was then carried back thither, where it remained until the dissolution of the house, and now it is preserved in the British Museum.

That interlinear Dano-Saxon translation was one of the earliest versions in the vulgar tongue of the four Gospels. But it was exclusively for the priesthood, like the other gorgeous volumes which lay in the treasuries and on the altars of British churches in that age.

There can be little doubt, however, that the people of England were more or less familiar with the facts of Scripture through homely fragments of translation scattered abroad from a very early time. The Saxon Cædmon who sang the "Creation," told in familiar phrase, according to the Venerable Bede, the chief incidents in the Old and New Testaments. The birth of the world, the fall of man, the story of Israel, the life of the Lord, the descent of the Spirit, and the lives of the apostles were all included in his "Paraphrase," which was little else than a homely and popular versification of the Scripture adapted to the needs of the people. To say that popular renderings of Scripture incidents were unknown or even scarce in England before Wycliffe is historically and absurdly inaccurate. In the far North the Ruthwell Cross—still preserved after many vicissitudes in the parish church of that beautiful Dumfriesshire district—has carved around it in Runic letters the story of the Cross, and the central spaces are filled up with pictorial representations of the various Gospel incidents in the life of the Saviour.

The deciphering of what has now become famous as "The Ruthwell Cross" is a marvellous story, and one of the greatest triumphs of scholarship in modern times. The stone is all covered with sculptures of Scripture scenes, most of them from the life of our Lord; but round the edge of the arms of the cross are long lines of inscription in Runic letters, and the interpretation of these has been at last arrived at in the following extraordinary manner. In the year 1823 a German scholar was making a literary pilgrimage through Northern Italy, and in the old conventual library of Vercelli he by accident came upon an ancient yellow parchment, on which, among other things, was written, in the Anglo-Saxon language, a short poem entitled "The Dream of the Holy Rood." He felt deeply interested in discovering this scrap of old English sacred minstrelsy in a land so far away and in so unlikely a quarter; and, after rendering it carefully into modern English, he saw to his infinite surprise that it was almost identical with the hypothetical translation of the Runic letters on the old stone in the Dumfriesshire church. After a great deal of elaborate research, it has been finally settled that the Runic writing on the Ruthwell Cross is a copy of an ancient English poem, composed probably by Cædmon, and was carved about the year A.D. 655. Indeed, on the top of the cross the words are written—"Cædmon made me." It was therefore about the close of the seventh century of our Christian era that this religious poem—which seems to have been quite current and popular in England and the south of Scotland—was put into a more durable form on this stone cross. It is the "Story of the Cross" as told by

a British Christian of the seventh century, in simple language and with genuine feeling.

Here is the Ruthwell inscription put into modern English. The idea is that a Christian falls asleep, and sees the Cross, in a vision, surrounded by angels; and the Cross breaks forth into a soliloquy, and tells the story of what happened to it and to its Divine Bearer on the ever-memorable Crucifixion Day—the darkest day in history:

"'Twas many a year ago,
I yet remember it,
That I was hewn down
At the wood's end.
Then men bare me upon their shoulders
Until they set me down upon a hill.
Then saw I tremble
The whole extent of earth.
He mounted me;
I trembled when He embraced me;
Yet dared I not to bow earthwards.
I raised the powerful King
The Lord of the Heavens.
They pierced me with dark nails.
They reviled us both together.
I was all stained with Blood,
Poured from His Side.
The shadow went forth
Pale under the welkin.
All creation wept,
They mourned the fall of their King."

This is the "testimony of the rocks" to the Faith of Christ—a sermon in stone, preached twelve hundred years ago; but still its voice is heard proclaiming that faith wherein we stand, the faith of the Church of Britain of to-day, as it was in that early Christian age. It is

the same old gospel to-day as it was yesterday, and as it will be for ever. "Jesus Christ is always Himself."

The Venerable Bede gave England a translation of the Lord's Prayer and of St. John's Gospel, and the story of its completion is one of the classics of ecclesiastical history. Asser, King Alfred's biographer, declares that the most necessary parts of Scripture were accessible to Englishmen, while it was the good King's desire to make the scheme of popularising the Scripture perfectly complete, but was unable to do much.

There was no more diligent student of the Bible than Alfred, who kept a "handboc" in which he wrote down extracts from Scripture, especially the Psalms, of some of which he made original translations. He used earnestly to persuade all his subjects to read the Scriptures; and as Edward VI. rebuked that courtier who stood on the holy book to reach down something from a height, and kissed the volume by way of reparation, so Alfred enshrined the gospel in the heart of his people, and, like Victoria the Good, whom both these kings so greatly resembled, pointed to the sacred volume (whether the incident be true or not matters little, for the spirit was there) as "the secret of England's greatness."

The book of Psalms and the four Gospels were translated into vulgar Saxon at a very early stage, the edition of the *Anglo-Saxon and Early English Psalter* reprinted in 1844 by the Surtees Society from MSS. in the British Museum being conclusive proof that popular versions of Scripture were quite common in the Saxon Church. Mr. Forshall, in his preface to the Wycliffe translation of the Bible (4 vols., Oxford, 1850), declares in his preface that "the writings which are still extant show that the Anglo-Saxon Church must have had in

its own tongue a considerable amount of scriptural instruction."

The Lord's Prayer seems to have been of the special pieces of sacred writ used in the vulgar tongue by the English people. Bishop Ælfric in A.D. 700 gives it in Anglo-Saxon roughly thus: "Uren Fader thic arth in heofnas, sic gehalgud thin noma, so cymeth thin ric. Sic thin willa sue is heofnas and in eortho." In A.D. 900 the same prayer that teaches to pray appears thus: "Thu ure Fader the eart on heofnum, si thin nama gehalgod: cume thin rice, si thin willa on eorthen sue sue on heofenum." In A.D. 1160 a metrical version of the Paternoster composed by Pope Adrian—the only Englishman who ever filled the papal chair—was sent broadcast over England:

"Ure Fader in heaven rich
Thy Name be hayled ever lich.
Thou bring us thy mickell blisse
Ais hit in heaven y-doe
Evar in yearth beene it also."

About Wycliffe's age the ordinary version ran thus:

"O oure Father which arte in heven
Halowed be Thy name.
Let Thy kingdom come, Thy will be fulfilled
As well in erthe as it is in heven.
Give us this daye ure dayly bred."

Besides Bede's "St. John," the four Evangelists translated by the learned men of Alfred's court, and some books of the Old Testament translated by Ælfric in King Ethelred's reign, in a later age a Norman priest paraphrased the Gospels and Acts, while Richard Rolle, "the hermit of Hampole," who sang so sweetly of

the Celestial Country after the manner of St. Bernard, aided by a few learned priests of his neighbourhood, produced a version of the Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles. The Psalter was the only Scripture book which was translated into all the three languages of England—Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and Old English.

During the period of English Church history subsequent to the Norman Conquest, Scripture translations were frequent. In the thirteenth century the entire Psalter was translated into French and English for the benefit of the mixed populations of England at the time,—a rendering at once simple, strenuous, and fairly accurate and literal. During the reigns of the first three Edwards many popular translations of Scripture portions appeared and had wide circulation, chiefly poetical paraphrases of incidents, events, and teachings in the two Testaments. Archbishop Usher in his treatise, *De scripturis et sacris vernaculis* (London, 1690), even goes the length of declaring that long before Wycliffe, England was in possession of the entire Bible in the vernacular,—an assertion which Dr. James, the famous author of the *Apology for John Wickcliffe* (Oxford, 1608), the keeper of the Bodleian and Cottonian Libraries, and a devoted admirer of the Reformer, upholds and defends. This important assertion, however, cannot in the face of recent researches and examinations be upheld and defended, and the editors of Wycliffe's Bible refuse to accept it as in any sense accurate.

1378–1384,—long prior to the invention of printing, may be taken as the date of the publication of Wycliffe's completed Bible. Transcripts were necessarily extremely costly, and in Wycliffe's own day the value

of one of his New Testaments was about £45 of our money. A most beautiful copy of the entire Bible was in the possession of His Royal Highness the late Duke of Sussex, and it is calculated by the Wycliffe Society, which has done so much to preserve copies not only of the entire work, and of smaller detached Gospels, Epistles, etc., but also of the Reformer's tracts and works generally, that altogether there are still extant some one hundred and fifty hand-written copies of Wycliffe's immortal work.

Wycliffe's English Bible is practically a translation of the existing Latin Vulgate copies. Hebrew was wholly unknown to, and even despised by, Christendom as the language of those who had crucified the Lord, forgetful of the fact that it was practically the language which flowed from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake. The Vulgate used by the father of the English Bible for his great work calls for a brief reference.

Prior to St. Jerome's great translation of the whole Bible, there were current many Latin versions of the Old Testament as well as of the New. One of the Fathers says, "Among the Latins there are as many different Bibles as copies of the Bible, for every man has added or subtracted, according to his own caprice, as he saw fit."

Jerome, seeing this, made a translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew somewhere between A.D. 390 and 400. Now, we are not aware whether St. Jerome was quite competent for this great work. He is said to have been a good Hebrew scholar, but we do not know that he was. But even granting that he could render Hebrew idioms and figures into

corresponding Latin forms of expression with a very considerable amount of discretion, his task was not then over.

Even so early as then, Hebrew manuscripts were in a state of the very utmost corruption, as is testified by many of the Fathers, among whom may be mentioned Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clemens Romanus, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius. St. Jerome had, therefore, to use a certain amount of critical judgment, which he may or may not have possessed, if his work was to be really valuable. Now, we know that the Fathers, though pious and in many cases learned, were, excepting Jerome and Origen, no critics. The science of criticism was then almost unknown, and certainly unformed. St. Jerome's translation was therefore, in all probability, not wanting in bad readings, got from inferior manuscripts, or perhaps even from the Septuagint, which he may have consulted. For this great undertaking he was much censured by his contempories, who contended that he had disturbed the all but universal reverence for the Septuagint.

In 605 this translation was adopted by Pope Gregory, but with it he incorporated the Old Italic Version. But still these steps did not ensure uniformity of reading throughout the Catholic world. In the ninth century Alcuin, and in the eleventh Lanfranc, made numerous emendations. In the Middle Ages the Latin text was in a state of the greatest corruption—so much so, that we find Roger Bacon remarking that in his day "every reader altered to suit his own whim." In this state the Latin Version continued, till *Stephens* revised it, and made a new text. About the same time *Clarius* submitted to the Tridentine Council a schedule

of eighty thousand mistakes, which had crept in in the course of ages. Pope Sixtus v. undertook to be proof-reader, and accordingly, in 1589, a new version of the Vulgate issued from his Vatican, in which "eaque res quo magis incorrupti perficeretur, nostra nos ipsi manu correximus."

In 1591, in the pontificate of Clement VII., a standard copy was issued, and pronounced "perfect." This text has ever since been held to be the standard Latin Vulgate. But we are not told according to what principles his Sixtine version was arrived at. The probability is that a compromise was made amongst all the current versions, and thus general satisfaction was given.

The common Vulgate of the Church in England, used by the priests, together with the fragments of English Scripture portions and hymns, was the groundwork of Wycliffe's Bible. Even had he been a Hebrew scholar and had Hebrew been known in England in the fourteenth century, manuscripts were not to the hand. Even when the forty-seven translators of King James VI.'s Bible translated their work, it was almost impossible to get a reliable Hebrew MS., and as a matter of fact the present "Authorised Version" dedicated to "the most High and Mighty Prince James" is little else than the older English Bibles revised and compared with the Vulgate and Septuagint.

Accordingly Wycliffe's Bible steps into a position of even greater importance than at first sight appears, for it was the parent of our present Authorised Version of all the various English Bibles which intervene between the two with the exception of the Roman Catholic English Bible of Rheims, which was a fresh translation from Greek and Latin.

A brief survey of the succession of the English Bible in its various forms from Wycliffe's parent masterpiece reveals some interesting movements and features: Wycliffe's Bible was only a translation of translations, and the English Bibles which succeeded—Tyndale's (1530), Coverdale's (1535), Cranmer's "Great Bible" (1540), the Genevan Version (1557), the Bishops' Bible (1568), the Rhemish New Testament (1582), and the Authorised Version (1607)—were all more or less translations from the Vulgate also, though the Rhemish Translation of the New Testament professed to include also a "diligent comparison with the Greek and other editions in divers languages." "We have presumed," say the fathers of the Roman College of Rheims, "not in hard places to mollify the speech or phrases, but religiously keep them word for word and point for point, for fear of missing or restraining the sense of the Holy Ghost to our phantasy." Wycliffe's was the first complete translation of the whole Bible into English, and all or almost all the subsequent versions were indebted to it and were guided by it.

Taking a broad survey of the whole subject of the succession of our English Bibles, Wycliffe's stands out as the mother of them all; and while itself only a homely translation of existing Vulgate versions, varying, defective, and even contradictory, forms the basis and foundation of that great book which has done more than any other to form, settle, and guide the English language and character.

It is noticeable in the ecclesiastical histories of England and Scotland of this period, that all who were examined for heresy appealed directly to the Scriptures, showing the influence which they began to exert over

the minds of men generally. A second edition of Wycliffe's Bible was issued in 1390, ten years after the first, revised by a man named Purvey, so that men here and there were by that time laying hands on the charter of their liberties. It only remains to be re-stated that this of Wycliffe was the first *complete* written Bible in English; and it is a curious fact that the whole work was never printed till about sixty years ago (1845).

Still more striking, however, than even the fact that our English Bible had its birth at Lutterworth, is the stupendous thought that through this, the Bible has been given to the world, for the three hundred translations or so of the Bible into all the languages of the earth have nearly all been made from the English Bible. Neither the Roman nor the Greek branches of the Church have ever given any people the Scripture in the vulgar tongue of that people or tribe. The spreading abroad of Bible translations into Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Hindustâni, and all the chief tongues of man, not to speak of the scores of minor languages on Indian hills, beside Equatorial African lakes, in Australasian islands, and amid Esquimaux snows, has been the almost exclusive work, triumph, glory, and crown of the great Bible Societies of Britain. And thus Wycliffe's Bible becomes the parent-Bible of all the Bibles of the world, and his voice has gone through all the earth, and his words unto the end of the world. Fuller's account of his ashes being carried to every shore is not an image but a fact, for the millions of every clime and colour who to-day, in earth's multitudinous tongues, read man's best guide-book to heaven, and catch the gleam, through its printed letters, of another and a brighter land, owe

their book to the rector of Lutterworth, who first took the clasps off the holy volume and opened it freely to the world. If Chaucer is the "Father of English Poetry," Wycliffe is undoubtedly the "Father" not only of the English Bible, but through it of the Bibles of the world.

We cannot determine when Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was really begun, and in his many writings he very curiously makes hardly any allusion to the great work and masterpiece of his life; but the colossal task was completed during the last few years of his life in the calm peace of his Lutterworth study. The New Testament translation which appeared first was Wycliffe's own personal work, while Dr. Nicholas Hereford of Oxford, his trusty friend and helper, was probably responsible for the greater part of the Old Testament, while another loyal adherent, John Purvey, Wycliffe's curate at Lutterworth, helped in both, revising and re-editing the whole.

The great work of translation having been finished, the next problem was how to get reproductions of the volume so as to scatter Scripture truth abroad over the land; for in his treatise on *The Truth and Meaning of Scripture*, Wycliffe rests his faith absolutely on the Scripture for doctrine, discipline, and daily conduct. "A Christian man," he says, "well understanding it, may gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage upon earth: all truth is contained in Scripture, and we should admit of no conclusion not approved there. There is no court beside the Court of Heaven; though there were an hundred Popes and all the friars in the world was turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the gospel than we should from all that

multitude: true sons will in no wise go about to infringe the will and testament of their heavenly Father." At a later period he wrote: "As the Faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in an orthodox sense the better."

Wycliffe had done his great work with great obstacles. Apart from the positive and strenuous opposition of the Church, his health was broken down with work, worry, and persecution, and above all, in addition, he had little knowledge either of Hebrew or of Greek, and had to rely mainly on the ordinary Vulgate of the priesthood.

The work was finished in 1382, and with characteristic energy Wycliffe got scores of willing workers to copy the Bible out. The demand was so great that with hundreds of expert hands busy at work, the demand could not be met. Some of the wealthy had copies made for themselves, while those who were poorer had to content themselves with portions of the Bible,—a Gospel or the Psalms or an Epistle. The catalogue of the Wycliffe Bible MSS. in the British Museum shows how this is historically correct, some of the entries showing a whole Bible, others a New Testament, others a portion of Old or New Scripture. Through the kindness of the librarian the following complete list of all Wycliffe's Bible MSS. in the Museum library is given:

WYCLIFFE BIBLES

(*This list does not include all liturgical fragments and psalters.*)

Later Version.		Earlier Version.
Royal 1 A iv.	N.T.	Royal 1 B vi. N.T.
„ 1 A x.		„ 1 B ix. St. John, etc.
„ 1 A xii.		„ 17 A xxvi. „

Later Version.			Earlier Version.
Royal 1 C viii.			Eg. 617, 618 (Prov.–Macc.
„ 1 C ix. and Harl. 5017.			and N.T.).
Cotton. Cland. E. ii.			Add. 15580 (Prov.–Macc.
Harley	272.	N.T.	and N.T.).
„	327.	Acts, Epp. etc.	
„	940.	„	
„	984.	St. Matth.	
„	1212.	N.T.	
„	1896.	Psalter.	
„	2249.	Joshua–Ps.	
„	2309.	Gosp.	
„	3903.	Job and Tobit.	
„	4027.	N.T.	
„	4890.	N.T.	
„	5017.	Macc. and N.T.	
„	5767.	St. Luke and St. John.	
„	5768.	Cath. Epis. and Apocalypse.	
„	6333.	Acts, Epistles, etc.	
Lansdowne	407.	N.T.	
„	455.	N.T. Lessons, etc.	
Arundel	104.	N.T.	
„	254.	Cath. Epis., Lessons, etc.	
Burney	30.	St. John and Hebrews.	
Egerton	1165.	N.T.	
„	1171.	N.T., Lessons, etc.	
Add.	5890–5902.	(18th cent. copy.)	
„	10046.	(Psalms, etc.)	
„	10047.	„	
„	10596.	(Tobit, Susanna, etc.)	
„	11858.	(N.T.) same hand as Harl. 2249.	
„	15517.	(Gospels.)	

For the above see Forshall and Madden's edition.

„	28256.	(Apoc.)
„	31044.	(Ps., Prov. etc.)

From the register of Alnwick, bishop of Norwich, it appears that in 1429 a Wycliffe Testament cost four marks and forty pence or £2, 16s. 8d., a sum equal to more than twenty pounds of our money, which was a fabulous sum to pay for such a work, considering the fact that £5 a year was considered in those days a sufficient income annually for a cleric, yeoman, or tradesman.

So numerous were these copies, that when in 1850 Sir F. Madden and Mr. Forshall edited the standard edition of Wycliffe's Bible, they were able to consult some 150 MSS., and of these most of them were written by scribes within forty years of the Reformer's death. Handed about secretly from house to house, placed in churches and libraries where it was possible, the leaven thus spread till all England was touched. "To Wycliffe," as Prof. Montague Burrows says, "we owe more than to any one person who can be mentioned, our English language, our English Bible, and our Reformed religion. How easily the words slip from the tongue! But is not this almost the very atmosphere we breathe?" At last came the invention of printing, and the yellow, well-worn heirlooms were laid aside for the cleaner and more readable and infinitely more numerous Bibles from the Press.

Naturally the wonderful popularity of the translation roused renewed ire in ecclesiastical circles. That uncompromising opponent of the Reformer, Knighton, the learned canon of Leicester, declared: "Christ delivered His gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons, according to the state of the times and the wants of men. But this Master John Wycliffe

translated it out of Latin into the tongue Anglican—not Angelic! Thus it became of itself vulgar, more open to the laity and to women who could read than it usually is to the clergy, even the most learned and intelligent. In this way the gospel-pearl is cast abroad and trodden underfoot of swine: and that which was before precious both to clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common jest of both."

Not content with mere grumbling, however, the Synod of 1408 held by Archbishop Arundel, hence called the Arundel Synod, passed the resolution: "We enact and ordain that no one henceforth do by his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English tongue or into any other by way of book or treatise: nor let any book or treatise now lately composed in the time of John Wycliffe or since or hereafter to be composed, be read in whole or in part, in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication. A Bill was brought into Parliament to suppress the translation, but was rejected by a vast majority, showing the continued and increasing aspiration of the laity for spiritual freedom and release from the encroaching power of Rome.

The Lollard preachers naturally spread the translation in whole or in parts and read and preached from the written parchments which they carried with them, one of them more particularly having left his mark on English life, John Ashton, who in market-places, at fairs, in churchyards, under the roadside trees, or in lowly cottages, read and preached from the newly-published gospel to the wondering awe of the people to whom the message came with all the freshness of a new revelation and a resurrection of Truth from the

dead. The same Knighton, scholar and divine though he was, was bitter, not only about the circulation of the Scripture in the vulgar tongue, but also about the homely men, who, in their russet habits, gathered the people around them and gave them their Scripture message. In 1382 he wrote: "Their number is increased, and starting like saplings from the root of a tree, they are multiplied, and fill every place within the compass of the land."

It was a homely translation for the homes of England, and Wycliffe's rendering of St. John xiv. 1–4, a passage read to himself, at his passing, may be quoted as an example of the style and forcible homeliness of the whole work:

"Be not youre herte afraid, ne drede it; ye bileuen in God, and bileue ye in me. In the hous of my fadir ben many dwellyngis; if ony thing lesse, Y hadde seid to you, for Y go to make redi to you a place. And if Y go, and make redi to you a place, eftsoones Y come and Y schal take you to my silf, that where Y am, ye be. And whidur Y go ye witen, and ye witen the weie."

As showing the value set nowadays on Wycliffe's Bible and Gospels, the case may be cited of the sale a year or two ago at Sotheby's of a valuable and interesting MS. of Wycliffe's New Testament, with calendar, etc., on 341 leaves octavo, dating from *circa* 1425. It is finely written, 27 of the pages have very choicely illuminated borders of flower decorations connected with a beautiful ornamental initial, and there are many other separate initials with short marginal decorations. The pedigree of the volume goes back to the time of Queen Elizabeth, for

in July 1591 it was presented by Ralph Rokeby, Master of the Old Foundation of St. Katherine's Hospital, to William Lambarde, the well-known Kentish historian; in 1773 the MS. was in the possession of William Herbert, the historian. of English topography, and afterwards in that of Charles Mayo, M.A., F.R.S. (1767–1858), first Rawlinson Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, and was inherited by the vendor. It was lately purchased by Mr. Quaritch for £550. There are several early MSS. of Wycliffe's translation of the Bible in existence, and during the last few years two very remarkable versions of the complete Bible have appeared at Sotheby's; one was in the sale of a portion of the Appendix MSS. of Lord Ashburnham, sold at Sotheby's on 1st May 1899, on 404 leaves folio, and this realised £1750; and another, written *circa* 1410, on 269 leaves folio, sold for £1200 on 16th May 1901.

CHAPTER XII

WYCLIFFE'S "POOR PREACHERS"

IN the age of John Wycliffe, as has already been indicated, the preaching of the faith of Christ had practically disappeared, and though the friars were preachers, their preaching was not the declaration of the truths and doctrines of the faith, but general harangues on whatever took their fancy, and their great aim was to attract the attention and sustain the interest of their hearers by any means. The result was that their preaching often descended into vulgar jesting and buffoonery. But the Church had other means of reaching the masses of the people, namely, spectacular displays of sacred themes,—chiefly the life of Christ, the Four Last Things; and some slight account of this theatrical method of keeping the common people in touch with the main facts of the Christian religion seems to be called for, as the Church in this as in many other matters took a leaf out of the book of Paganism and pasted it inside the book of the Gospels.

It is needless here to allude to the place and power of the Greek drama. It was from the Athenian stage that Greece got her tone; the orator and the actor were the instructors of the people. Greek philosophy might suffice for the few; the Greek drama was for

all. The Athenian actor stood before the assembled city, and could appeal to the open sky above and the earth around; with living earnestness he could point to objects dear to the Athenian heart—to the blue Ægean and the gleaming Parthenon. It was then that truths, otherwise abstract and unpractical, were held up to universal admiration. It is easy to imagine how it must have affected the vast audience when, in Euripides, the actor, pointing to the blue sky overhead, exclaimed:

> "See'st thou th' abyss of sky that hangs above thee,
> And clasps the earth around in moist embrace?
> This to be Jove believe, this serve as God."

The early Christians denounced dramatic exhibitions in no measured terms; and, not content with words, they refused baptism to those in any way connected with a theatre. Like many of the Reformers, they confused things essential and non-essential; seeking to avoid Paganism, they became, in many cases, fanatics.

The Christian Fathers, of whom a more moderate spirit might have been expected, loudly denounced all plays of whatever kind. "It is a shame," says one Father, "that anyone should listen to a comedian with the same ears as he hears an evangelical preacher." And Tertullian, the prince of polemical divines, says of the high heels worn by tragedians: "The devil sets them upon their high pantofles to give Christ the lie, who said, 'Nobody can add one cubit to his stature.'"

Nearly two centuries pass away, and looking once more at the Christian Church, we find it altered not only in opinion but in practice. Many things at first

considered immoral or irreligious are now openly approved. The Church discovers that the drama is not only harmless, but that it has an almost infinite power for good: it was seen that lessons in religion could be taught with greater effect from the stage than from the pulpit. The performance of religious plays dates from about the fourth century of the Christian era. One of the earliest authors of such compositions was Gregory of Nazianzen, the master of Saint Jerome, and Patriarch of Constantinople. He wrote a large number of dramas from the Old and New Testaments, and these he caused to be acted instead of the plays of Euripides and Sophocles throughout his diocese. *Christ's Passion* is the only one extant which is known certainly to be of his authorship; all the others are lost. A German nun, of the name of Roswitha, is said to have assisted him in some of these works. Several other ecclesiastical dignitaries engaged themselves similarly, but few of their plays are extant.

For several centuries religious plays ceased to be performed; but after the Crusades, towards the close of the fourteenth century, they were revived by pilgrims who had returned from the Holy Land. The right of way for Christians to the Holy Sepulchre was then newly acquired; yet it seems strange that the revival of religious dramas should originate from the pilgrims. A conjectural explanation may be offered. At the present day, during Eastertide, the material circumstances of our Saviour's Passion are represented by the monks of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

This practice is known to be of long standing, although it is not certain that it was in existence

during crusading times. It is very probable, however, that the returned pilgrims from Palestine, remembering the telling effect of the representation witnessed at Jerusalem, were anxious to afford the common people frequent opportunities of witnessing such exhibitions, and hence revived the passion-plays. Certain it is that in 1390, a number of sandal-shod pilgrims appeared in Paris, and, assisted by some of the more influential inhabitants, erected a stage on which they acted *The Passion of Christ.* The Parisians were much affected by the spectacle, and from that day the popularity of the passion-plays rapidly increased. The pilgrims formed themselves into a "Fraternity of the Passion," and through their influence the representation of these religious plays flew speedily over Europe, and at last reached the shores of England.

Prior to the Reformation the representation of mysteries was one of the chief instruments in the religious education of the people; and nowhere were they more frequently performed than in England. The Chester mysteries vied with those of Coventry in richness and splendour. England was considered particularly well favoured in this respect. It was the boast of Henry II. that "London, instead of common interludes belonging to the theatre, had plays of a more holy subject; representations of those miracles which the holy confessors wrought, and of the sufferings wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs did appear."

The Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness, the Descent into Hades, the Last Supper, the Resurrection, Ascension, and the Day of Judgment—these were the

subjects of the old mysteries. Round the rude stage, erected in front of the Cathedral Church, crowded the rough burly Saxons of the olden time, while young and old gazed with mute admiration on the solemn scenes enacted before their eyes.

"The common waies with bowes are strawde,
And every streete beside,
And to the walles and windowes all
Are bowes and branches tied.
The monkes in every place do roame,
The nonnes abrode are sent.
The priestes and schoolmen loud do rore,
Some use the instrument."

These were frequent scenes in Old England both before and after the Reformation. Not only in England, however, but all over Europe, these sacred plays were acted. Even the grave fathers who composed the Council of Constance did not think it beneath their dignity to become actors for the nonce, and play *The Massacre of the Innocents.* In A.D. 1313, Philip the Fair gave a splendid banquet at Paris, during which the people were entertained with a miracle play, which bore the odd title, *The Glory of the Blessed, and the Torments of the Damned.* Monks, bishops, and cardinals not only countenanced such performances, but also took part in them. Had it not been for these plays, the common people would have been utterly ignorant of religion and the gospel; and although frequently there were incidents more fitted to provoke laughter than devout feeling, still it is undeniable that much benefit was derived from them by the lower orders.

The Chester and Coventry mysteries, the religious

dramas which were wont to draw vast crowds all over Europe, are now dead and forgotten; there is one solitary survivor of the miracle-plays still in existence, the famous Passion-play of Oberammergau, begun so late as 1633, when a terrible plague raged in the Ammer valley, and threatened to devastate the whole district, whereupon the villagers of Ammergau made a solemn vow that if God would spare them, they would represent every ten years, "for thankful remembrance and edifying contemplation, by the help of the Almighty, the sufferings of Jesus, the Saviour of the world." This vow has been religiously performed, and regularly as the years glide by the old drama is revived and the old interest reawakened.

It probably is of a much finer type and tone than the ordinary mysteries of Wycliffe's time, against which the Reformer spoke so warmly. It is really as scriptural as anything of the kind could be, and some years ago was gone through in the Alpine valley with as much reverence and devout feeling as of old. The play consists of eighteen acts, each scene being preceded by at least one tableau. The tableaux are very vivid and striking, and form a background to the scene in the Passion of Christ, which is being acted in the front of the stage. Thus, the first scene is the "Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem"; the tableaux representing the "Expulsion from Eden," and a cross surrounded by children kneeling as in prayer. Again, in the fifteenth act, the scene is "Christ bearing His cross to Calvary," the tableaux behind representing Isaac carrying wood up Mount Moriah, and Moses erecting the brazen serpent. Thus every scene has a suitable background. The performers, in

number about five hundred, include a large proportion of the villagers: men and women of all ages are proud to take part in the solemn drama: children form the tableaux, whilst adults take part in the scenes. The village organist is the author of the music sung to the hymns which occur at intervals in the performance. The tunes are very appropriate; often low and sad, as when the dead Christ is being laid in Joseph's new tomb; but again light and joyful, as when the stone rolls away from the sepulchre, and the Resurrection is accomplished. The preface to the Hymn Book, with which we shall conclude these remarks, shows the devout and reverent spirit of the simple-minded villagers: "May all who come to see how the divine man trod this path of sorrows, to suffer as a sacrifice for sinful humanity, well consider that it is not sufficient to contemplate and admire the divine original; that we ought rather to make this divine spectacle an occasion for converting ourselves into His likeness, as once the saints of the Old Testament were His fitting foreshadowers. May the outward representation of His sublime virtues rouse us to the holy resolution to follow Him in humility, patience, gentleness, and love.

"If that which we have seen in a figure becomes to us life and reality, then the vow of our pious ancestors will have received its best fulfilment, and then will that blessing not fail to us with which God rewarded the faith and the trust of our fathers."

The mysteries and miracle-plays which constituted the drama in the Middle Ages were no doubt edifying to mediæval taste, and to its sense of the fitness of things. Whether they would be so now may be

guessed by running over a few of the items in some accounts for expenses. "In *Mysteries* enacted at Coventry," says Dr. Draper, "are such entries as 'paid for a pair of gloves for God,' 'paid for gilding God's coat,' 'dyvers necessaries for the trymmynge of the Father in Heaven.' In the play of the *Shepherds* there is provision for green cheese and Halton ale, a suitable recruitment after their long journey to the birthplace of our Saviour. 'Paid to the players for rehearsal: imprimis, to God, iis. viii*d.*; to Pilate his wife, iis.; item, for keeping fyer at hell's mouth, iii*d.*'" Mr. Spencer quotes the following: "We have frequently such entries as these: 'Item, payd for the spret (spirit) God's cote, ij*s.*' We learn from these entries that God's coat was of leather, painted and gilt, and that He had a wig of false hair, also gilt." Other entries are, "Paid for setting the world on fire, 5*d.*"; "Paid for mending hell-mouth"; "Cheverel (peruke) for God." Ludicrous anachronisms are common. Thus, says Dr. Draper: "Noah's wife, who, it appears, was a termagant, swears by the Virgin Mary that she will not go into the ark, and, indeed, is only constrained to do so by a sound cudgelling, administered by the patriarch." "In the play of *The Fall of Man*, Adam and Eve appear entirely naked, one of the chief incidents being the adjustment of the fig-leaves."

Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries* is a revelation of the state of the religious stage in England in mediæval times. The grossest and most ludicrous ideas were staged, and the most sacred scenes and names treated with professional lightness and flippancy. *The Harrowing of Hell*, one of the

most popular of the Chester mysteries—*The Draper's Play*, the subject of which was the creation, in which a highly humorous representation was given of the extraction of Eve out of Adam's side; *Every Man*, *The Mystery of Candlemas Day*, *Hycke-Scorner*, *The Shepherds of Bethlehem*, *The Modyr of Mercy* were the favourite sacred dramas of that age.

The Reformers were at a loss how to regard these highly popular methods of amusing and instructing the people—methods which to some extent have been revived during Lent and Eastertide in France and Spain, though England some years ago gave a proposed introduction of a passion-play in London, a very plain and unceremonious expression. To some extent in Jerusalem during Holy Week sacred dramatic performances are to be seen to-day. The dramatic sentiment in human nature is difficult to eradicate, even if it were desirable.

Wycliffe vigorously and consistently denounced these exhibitions and representations of Bible scenes and persons; while Luther declared that "such spectacles often do more good and produce more impression than sermons." Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, whose satires on the Church assisted to bring about the Scottish Reformation, with which he entirely and cordially sided, not only approved of these sacred and moral dramatic exhibitions, but himself wrote several "moralities" which were frequently represented,—some of them dealing severely with the vices of the clergy, at the time being performed in presence of the King and the bishops. The position of Wycliffe was that the pictorial and spectacular teaching of the Church should be superseded by the simple

preaching of the simple gospel, and that an end should be made of theatrical instruction. It is a very large question how far forms and ceremonies may aid religious instruction, but Wycliffe's position was a clear, distinct, and firm one, namely, that the plain and simple preaching of the gospel was the best means of reaching the hearts and consciences of men and women. Accordingly, his "poor preachers" were sent forth russet-clad to preach in market-places, village-greens, at roadsides and crosses, wherever a congregation could be gathered. It is remarkable that the Roman Church in a later age should have taken a leaf out of Wycliffe's book, for this was the very method adopted by St. Francis de Sales, bishop and prince of Geneva, when he founded the Oratorians, the distinctive character of whose ministry was—since the Reformation had so alienated the masses of the people from the Church — to win them back by preaching at street-corners, in markets, and anywhere outside or inside where people gathered, the stilted ceremonial and usages of the ordinary clergy being abandoned for a more free-and-easy commerce with the people—exactly Wycliffe's idea and method. In course of time they built beautiful churches, but even yet — witness the sumptuous Brompton Oratory in London to-day, the home of Newman, who gave the world "Lead, kindly Light," and of Faber, who sang the sweet devotional reverie, "O Paradise, O Paradise" —there are no pulpits, only a chair with a cross beside it, where, seated, the Oratorian brother talks familiarly and conversationally to his congregation. It is Wycliffe's idea, borrowed from his "poor preachers" with their simple talk and hearty message.

When Victor Hugo said, "Give to the people who toil and suffer, for whom this world is hard and bad, the belief that there is a better made for them; scatter Gospels among the villages—a Bible in every cottage," he was only echoing Wycliffe's ideas as to a free and open Bible and Gospel. Some twenty years ago a cheap translation of the Gospel sold in thousands in Paris, the novelty of the work was so great. It was a wonderful step for the Church of Rome to take even to authorise at all this popular edition of the Gospel. It was a pity that the imprimatur was withdrawn and that other things happened besides, which are quite familiar to those who have followed this interesting train of events; but that does not make it less a fact that for once the Church of Rome opened its doors to the simple Scripture, even though it closes them soon after. The reference I made was merely a reference, and as such it was impossible to go into details, which, besides, were pretty generally familiar. I still hold that it showed an advance when such a step as this granting of the imprimatur was ever for a moment entertained, just as the vast sale of the New Testament Scriptures in Russia of late among the Jews—quite as striking a movement as the French one—proved a certain shaking of the dry bones amongst a religious community which has hitherto been supposed to be quite as bitterly opposed to the circulation of the New Testament as the Roman Church has hitherto been supposed to be to the circulation of the entire Bible. The mere thought of the thing, apart altogether from the execution, much more apart from any other circumstances, adverse or otherwise, proved a spirit of advance.

CHAPTER XIII

Wycliffe's Theology

By far the most outstanding feature of Wycliffe's life and work is the claim he makes for the absolute supremacy, sufficiency, and infallibility of the Scripture; and his work, *Of the Truth of Holy Scripture*, in Latin, develops his views in a most clear and explicit manner. Christ is the author of the Scripture, and as the Word of God, it should be in the hands and heart of everyone, cleric and lay—a right denied by the Church of Rome. Father Stevenson in his *Truth about Wycliffe* denies that the Roman Church forbade the Bible to the people, and quotes passages from the early Christian Fathers in proof of this; but his quotations from the Fathers of the first six centuries regarding the free use and sole infallibility of the Bible only bring into contrast the position of the later Roman Church of the Middle Ages, after the process of "development" described by Newman had resulted in the denial to the laity both of the Book and of the Cup. The question is so important a one in the Wycliffe controversy, as showing that the Reformer's desire was to get back to the primitive position of the Church as to a free and open Bible, that any extracts from the Fathers will at once establish Wycliffe's position, and refute the arguments

of Father Stevenson and the advocates of the "Catholic Truth Society."

Twenty years ago the publication of the four Gospels, translated by Henri Lasserre into popular and homely French, received episcopal sanction. The story of that popular issue of the Gospels, and the sensation made in France by the practical rediscovery of the Evangel, is, however, so typical of Roman methods of treating Bible-reading, that no apology is made for retelling the incident as recorded in the *Contemporary Review* at the time, for the modern incident throws a flood of light on the Church's relation to Scripture in Wycliffe's age, and explains the vigour and force of the Reformer's contention to give back again the Bible to the people,—a triumph accomplished by Wycliffe (notwithstanding the denial that he did so by Father Stevenson and others), and which places him for ever in the roll-call of history as an "epoch-maker."

M. Henri Lasserre was a French barrister and literary man, who on a happy day discovered the four Gospels. He felt the spell of the simple but profound narratives which reveal Jesus of Nazareth; saw that the four-fold story was the book the French needed; believed that the Gospels would be received with joy by his countrymen; and resolved to prepare for them a version worthy of their acceptance. The result was a living translation. Every page said, "Read me." The arbitrary divisions of chapters and verses dis-appeared. The narrative fell into natural clauses and paragraphs. The Gospel of the Kingdom was made as attractive to the reader as a novel. The most charming book in the world was printed in such

a charming form that all might read, understand, enjoy, and love it, without the help of anyone.

In a few passages there are traces of the author's religious bias, but in questions of larger importance he breaks away from the traditional renderings of the papal Church. With splendid courage he translates the Greek word "repent" by "be converted," instead of by "do penance." The translation is made from the Greek, and the translator has not only consulted the commentators of his own Church and the Fathers, but has not neglected Protestant sources of information. The result is a free, fearless, and faithful rendering, remarkable for its intrinsic excellence, but still more remarkable as the work of a devout Catholic.

In a remarkable preface he indicts the Church of Rome for withholding the Gospels from the people. He deplores the "notorious fact that the Gospels are scarcely ever read by those who profess to be fervent Catholics, and never by the multitude of the faithful." Of "a hundred persons who practise the Sacraments there is seldom one who has ever opened the Gospels.' 'The Gospel—the most illustrious book in the world —is become an unknown book."

He declares that the Bible was not always so neglected; that all the Fathers urged the people to read both the Old and New Testaments, which were intended for all lands, races, and times. He blames the Protestants for their free handling of the Bible, which led the Council of Trent to decree that every translation should have episcopal sanction and explanatory notes; and then falls with tremendous severity on the modern Roman system which deprives

the people of the Bible, and sends forth his version of the Gospels with the following brave words:

"We must lead back the faithful to the great fountain of living water which flows from the inspired book. We must make them hear, taste, and relish the direct lessons of the Saviour—the words full of grace and truth which fell from His lips. We must put before them those teachings which have been given for all ages by the perfect Life—the life, perfectly human and perfectly Divine, of Him whom no sincere intelligence can contemplate without bending the knee; whom no true soul can hear and see without loving, without being seized with the desire to follow Him, and the will to serve Him. We must put the world again face to face with Jesus Christ."

The book was published in the closing days of 1886, or early in 1887, with the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Paris and the approval and benediction of the Pope. The imprimatur placed Lasserre's version regularly in the hands of the French people. The Pope's letter placed the stamp of authority, not only on the translation of the Gospels, but on the terrible preface. Within the space of twelve months twenty-five editions were published. It seemed as if Roman Catholic France was eagerly accepting the living Gospel of the living God.

When the book had reached the twenty-fifth edition, a splendid edition was issued "at the request of a great number of bishops and priests." A month after the first letter from Rome, His Excellence the Cardinal Vicar of His Holiness, the illustrious Cardinal Parocchi, wrote a second letter, also dated from the Vatican. He declares: "The famous author of the History of Nôtre Dame de Lourdes has just published a French translation of the Holy Gospels which is

an illumination of genius . . . as faithful to the text as to the purest French." Approved by the clergy and the press, the book became the Family Bible of France. In the words of the Bishop of Rodez— "Under the blessing of God the book goes more and more into all Christian homes."

At this point the Sacred Congregation by a decree, dated December 19, 1887, condemned and proscribed the version as a book of degraded doctrine, which no one was to read or possess. The immediate result was the complete withdrawal of Lasserre's version from circulation.

Does this decree place the Pope in the Index? How does the infallibility stand in the transaction? Can the Congregation of the Index annul the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Paris? One thing is certain: there is a power behind the Pope, the bishops, the press, and the people, still strong enough to strike the Gospels from the hands of those who would read them. Another thing is certain: the Gospels have a power to charm both priests and people if they were permitted to read them. At the time a well-known writer said: —"What is not certain is how this matter will end. Will the Pope, the cardinals, the bishops, the French press, and the French people submit to be treated as children incapable of judging for themselves? What of the French people who have bought the twenty-five editions of the book, and who have heard in their own tongue their Saviour's voice, which is still ringing in their ears? And what of Henri Lasserre, on whom the Divine eyes have looked down from the Cross? Of one thing I can assure him, he has the sympathy of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And

I think I can also promise that the people for whom his version was intended shall not be left to perish for lack of the Bread of Life."

This strange effort of the Roman Church to give the liberty of Scripture reading to the people and yet to circumscribe it, has another exemplification in the "Society of St. Jerome for the diffusion of the Holy Gospels," of which Cardinal Mocenni is president, and Mercati, the Vatican librarian, secretary. In 1902 it was founded to supply Italian Gospels to the people, and for less than twopence a little volume has been going through an immense sale, containing the four Gospels and the "Acts," printed in paragraphs, and for the most part a rendering of the Vulgate with footnotes. In the Preface reference is made to the work of the English Bible Societies, and "our separated Protestant Brethren" are kindly spoken of, only it is stated with regret that the British Testaments set up "the Gospel for the Church, and invite readers to draw from it directly and exclusively the dogmas of their faith and the rules of their life," whereas the Society of St. Jerome seeks to combine the two authorities of the Bible and the Church.

The spirit of the Roman Church to-day, greatly narrowed and accentuated and accompanied with stronger temporal power and physical force, was the spirit which Wycliffe in 1380 had to fight against. Wycliffe boldly announced his belief in the sufficiency, authority, and infallibility of the Scripture apart from any human institution or person, and that the departure from the "evangelical law," "God's Law," and "Christ's Law," as he calls the Bible, and the mixture of human traditions, at first slight but gradually increasing

till wholesale corruption was the rule, was the cause of all the Church's evils. Wycliffe's sentiment as to Scripture was identical with Lord Chillingworth's, and is the root-principle of Protestantism—"The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." In one passage in the *Trialogus* he says:

"If Christ had gone, in the least degree, more into detail, the rule of His religion would have become to a certain extent imperfect; but as it now stands, layman and cleric, married man and monk, servant and master, men in every position of life, may live in one and the same service, under Christ's rule. The evangelical law, moreover, contains no special ceremonies whereby the universal observance of it would have been made impossible; and therefore the Christian rule and religion, according to the form of it handed down to us in the gospel, is of all religions the most perfect, and the only one which is in and by itself good."

In Wycliffe's original contention for the supremacy of Scripture as the only rule of faith and life, there lies the formal principle of Protestantism, and the germ of the Reformation. Accordingly, Father Stevenson justly declares that Wycliffe's "horrible heresies" were the *fons et origo* of all the later Reformation troubles and revolutions. While through the Middle Ages an occasional protest was heard against some individual doctrine or practice of the Church, there was no organised attack made on the unscriptural institutions until Wycliffe called men back to Scripture, and, pointing to it and to the state of the Church, bade them look on this picture and on that.

Stevenson, indeed, declares that Wycliffe's teacher

in heresy was William Hughes, in the following passage:

"Whence did Wyclif derive these uncatholic opinions? Apparently from one single author. He never refers to any such source, nor has any such been pointed out by those who have studied his writings. The question has been asked more than once, and has never been answered. Yet Walden has quoted, and that more than once, the name of a certain *William Hughes*, or Hayes, the person from whom Wyclif derived many of his errors. To him he was indebted for the opinion that St. Peter was never at Rome, consequently never was bishop there; an honour which he was willing rather to yield to St. Paul. Several other of his errors are mentioned by Walden. That this individual did actually hold doctrines contrary to the orthodox faith is unquestionable, and it is equally beyond a doubt that he was Wyclif's teacher. Further inquiry reveals additional facts which place the character of this personage before us in a discreditable light. He was one of the insurgents who took a prominent part in the disturbances which broke out in Oxford on the election of the Chancellor in the year 1349. During these 'grave and enormous dissensions,' as they are described in the official document which was issued for their suppression, some persons were wounded and some were killed. The rioters interrupted the Masses which were being said in St. Mary's Church for deceased benefactors, and drove the officiating priest out of the sacred building. William Hayes (or Hughes) was one of those who was charged by name with having broken open the common chest of the University, and carried off the seal, the money,

the books, and the other property which they found therein; and these they were ordered by the Government to restore, under severe penalties. The history of this remarkable outbreak is instructive, marked though it be by sacrilege, plunder, and violence, for it solves what hitherto has been a difficulty. It shows us what manner of man he was to whom the future Reformer was indebted for his principles; and we now recognise the source whence John Wyclif derived the two leading peculiarities of his character, his craving after heresy, and his contempt for constituted authority."

Stevenson, however, and other Roman apologists freely make two admissions,—first, that the origin of all the troubles which came to the Church of Rome, and finally culminated in the great rebellion of the sixteenth century, lies at the door of John Wycliffe, the originator of the Protestant spirit; and, second, that the secret of his heresy and the origin of his evil doctrines was in an unguarded, ignorant, and unguided use of the Bible, which can only rightly be read under the guidance of the Church and in obedience to the "vox Petri," which is the "Vox Dei."

Hence it is that Wycliffe is designated "Doctor Evangelicus" by the centuries, as other lights in theology were described as "angelicus," "seraphicus," "profundus," "subtilis," "irrefragabilis," "resolutissimus," etc. His perpetual appeal was to Scripture as against tradition or authority, and he called loudly for a return to the primitive Church as represented by the early Fathers to whom Scripture was everything, and whose brightest wish was its universal diffusion.

"Hear the Church," cried the occupant of the sacred chair at Tiberside, — "vox Petri, vox Dei"; but

Wycliffe answered, "It is impossible that any word or any deed of the Christian should be of equal authority with Holy Scripture." Papal authority, therefore, came only second to that of the Scripture,—an admission which struck at the root of the entire papal system.

In his works, Wycliffe shows a wonderful knowledge of all Scripture. The *Trialogus* and all his works are brimful of quotations and references. He acknowledges the Bible as the source of all his teachings. The Waldenses appealed from Church law to Scripture truth, and thus pointed to a higher tribunal than the Italian chair; but they did not fully grasp the doctrine, so amply exhibited and illustrated by the rector of Lutterworth, of the absolute and infallible and sole authority of the book.

Tertullian might say, "Adoro plenitudinem scripturarum"; but Wycliffe said, "Adoro auctoritatem solam scripturarum."

As to the interpretation of Scripture, in his earlier years the Reformer claimed two guides—reason and the Church, but in his later years he rejected the latter, and declared that "no created being has power to reverse the sense of the Christian faith,—the holy doctors put us in no difficulty, but rather teach us to abstain from the love of novelties, and to be sober-minded." But the chief thought which he opposes to this view is that "the Holy Ghost teaches us the meaning of Scripture, as Christ opened the Scriptures to the apostles."

The Spirit of Christ teaches the reader if he reads with devoutness and humility, and to every honest "disciple of Scripture," Scripture is self-interpreting. True, reason must be brought along with faith, for the "letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Dean

Stanley took up the same position when, preaching in Westminster Abbey on the completion of the Revised Bible, he declared that "for the first time an attempt had been made, imperfect though it was, to reach the original meaning of the sacred words. The version of the sacred text now presented to us, enforces upon us a lesson which we were always apt to forget—namely, the truth that the Scripture teaches that inspiration consists not in the letter, but in the spirit, not in a particular passage, but in the general tendency and drift of the complete words." Wycliffe's method of scriptural interpretation recalls to a considerable extent the advice given by Charles Dickens to his children in his last will and testament—"I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children to try and guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there."

Locke, too, is of the same mind when he says: "I read the Word of God without prepossession or bias, and come to it with a resolution to take my sense from it, and not with a design to bring it to the sense of my system." Lord Bacon says: "Certainly, as wines which at first pressing run gently, yield a more pleasant taste than those where the wine-press is hard-wrought, because these somewhat relish of the stone and skin of the grape; so those observations are most wholesome and pleasant which flow from Scriptures gently expressed and naturally expounded, and are not wrested or drawn aside to commonplaces or controversies: such a treatise we will name 'the Emanations of Scripture.'" Against the interpretation

of Scripture by an outside infallible authority—the position of the Roman Church in the matter, Luther declared that "the sacred Scriptures are not to be understood but by that spirit with which they were written, which spirit is never felt to be more powerful and energetic than when He attends the serious perusal of the writings which He Himself dictated. Setting aside an implicit dependence on all human writings, let us strenuously adhere to the Scriptures alone."

Wycliffe's doctrine of the Holy Communion was practically the same as that of the interesting Scottish Reformer John Craig, once prior of Bologna, who, having been condemned to be burned on 19th April 1559, escaped through the remarkable circumstance that on that very day the Pope died, and in the tumult of the Roman populace he got deliverance. A Reformer within the Roman Church, he had an almost miraculous pilgrimage back to his native Scotland, being delivered from destitution through a dog laying a purse of money at his feet as he lay in despondency on the roadside. After reaching his native land he found he had forgotten his native tongue, and consequently was employed by the Reformers in Edinburgh to preach in Latin to the learned in the Magdalene Chapel in the Cowgate, which still stands. Thereafter he became Knox's colleague in St. Giles', and his "Catechism" sums up the conclusions of the Reformers of 1560, more especially as regards the sacrament. These views are practically the same as were propounded by his great English predecessor:

"*Q.* Is Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine? *A.* No; but His body and blood is only in heaven. *Q.* How then are the elements called His

body and blood? *A.* Because they are sure seals of His body and blood given to us. *Q.* Then we receive only the tokens, and not His body? *A.* We receive His very substantial body and blood. *Q.* How can that be proved? *A.* By the truth of His words and sacrament. *Q.* Declare that by the sacrament. *A.* As that natural substance of the elements is given, even so the natural substance of Christ's body. *Q.* But His natural body is in heaven. *A.* No doubt, but yet we receive it on earth. *Q.* How can that be? *A.* By the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit."

It must be carefully noticed that with the first Reformers the doctrine of a real presence was clearly and distinctly taught, — not transubstantiation, nor Luther's consubstantiation, but a real spiritual presence. The Zwinglian dogma of a simple memorial and symbol was in direct opposition to Calvin's *Institutes* and Knox's Confession of Faith, and the doctrine of the two Reformed Churches of England and Scotland in the Thirty-nine Articles and the Confession of Faith is identical with that enunciated by Wycliffe with such distinctness and persistency. In opposition to Roman transubstantiation and the cold symbol and memorial of the rationalist, Wycliffe held forth the scriptural dogma of Christ's real spiritual presence in the elements, so clearly enunciated by John Craig in his popular Scottish Catechism.

As to the Virgin Mary, he declared that it was not necessary to salvation to believe her to have been without original sin, nor that her Assumption was a bodily one. Christ is the great High Priest and not man, and Christ is above all earthly kings, whose vassals they are.

His views of conversion and repentance are identical with those of the Reformation, and saving faith in Christ is indispensable to salvation. To all intents and purposes he held by Luther's doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone. The basis of all virtue is humility, and love is the first Christian virtue; as Christ is our great example, and the Face of the Thorn-crowned, the most beautiful in the Album of Heaven. Grace is the source of goodness, and no works or merits can earn it, but only faith in Christ. The Church is the body of the elect,—those predestinated to eternal life. Preaching, not ceremonial, is God's chief instrument in the conversion of sinners. Images, saint and Virgin worship are unnecessary, though all intercede for and help us, and we ought to ask their aid. "It seems to me to be impossible," he once said, "that we should obtain the reward without the help of Mary." Wycliffe seems to have been a pessimist, and to have believed that the world was growing daily more corrupt; just as St. Bernard of Clugny in his great poem declared:

> "The world is very evil, the times are waxing late,
> Be sober and keep vigil, the Judge is at the gate."

He believed in the universal priesthood of all believers, the fallibility of the Pope, the original equality of bishop and presbyter, and the necessity for all Christian priests of a simple, humble life. In a word, for Christian priest and layman the chief consideration was humbly to follow "in His steps" and to ask "what would Jesus do?"

His political views tended to communism, or, at any rate, to Christian socialism, and his enemies declared him a revolutionary and an anarchist.

CHAPTER XIV

The Character of Wycliffe

Of modern Roman Catholics few have stood in a more unique position than the late Marquis of Bute, whose translation of the Breviary into English absorbed so great a part of his life, time, and energy, who, as George Eliot said of her translation of Strauss, "began it young and finished it old." His liberality of mind manifested itself in his study of Coptic and his admirable and scholarly translation of the Coptic Liturgy,—the liturgy of a non-Roman Communion. His gifts to secular universities made him not always popular with the officials of his Church in England, who would have preferred a more sectarian convert. The very fact of his translation of the Breviary showed his desire to popularise the best of Christian biography, and the following passage in a hitherto unpublished letter to the writer, ten years ago, shows that the spirit of manly criticism and inquiry was by no means stifled:—"I am sorry in one way that my translation of the Roman Breviary is out of print; on the other hand, it is, of course, gratifying to me that the work should have met with so much acceptance. I have been deterred from undertaking a new edition partly by the desire to be able to add a new appendix of the national offices for Scotland, which although, I believe,

now quite finished, have not, so far as I am aware, as yet received the sanction of the Holy See, and have certainly not yet been published for use. But still more by the fact that the present Pope has been constantly making alterations in the Breviary, to such an extent, indeed, that I do not think that there now exists any edition, however new, which has fully kept pace with the number of his changes. These changes have in one respect been gratifying to me,—namely, that he has ordered the omission of stories such as 'Constantine-and-the-bath-of-babies'-blood,' of which I have ventured respectfully to impugn the exactitude." The charming way in which the scholarly and beloved Scotsman (whose heart now lies in the Mount of Olives, opposite the Holy City), in the closing sentence descriptive of the tales of the Breviary, softens down what the old Adam would doubtless have described in Tom Fielding language, and which would have been included in the preliminary presupposition without which it was declared to have been impossible to proceed in any conversation with the late Lord Melbourne, is characteristic of the man, who ever desired to learn even from Wycliffe, and was a subscriber to the publication of the Reformer's works. An Ultramontane wasp charged him for doing this, and for the dissemination of heresy, regarding which Lord Bute wrote as follows to a friend:

"No one was more surprised than I myself to see in the papers that I had subscribed to the fund for publishing Wiclif's works. But it occurs to me that there exists an historico-literary society called the Wicliff Society, as it dedicates itself to printing his and other contemporary English works. If it exists,

it is not unlikely that I may be a subscriber to it, as I am to other societies which print mediæval things. Publications of this sort go straight into the hands of my librarian, and as the centre of the library is in our house in London, which never was furnished, and which my father's executors rented just to keep his books and pictures in, I seldom come across them, unless I specially ask for them. This I have never done as regards Wiclif, for I have been content with Lechler's *Life*, which contains copious extracts from his works, MS. as well as printed. His works are certainly of much historical interest; and if people would only read them before they talk about him, we should not hear as much nonsense about him and his acts and opinions as we do. If we are to abstain from printing matter of literary and historical interest because we do not agree with the sentiments expressed, philological and historical science would finish. I should subscribe without scruple to publish a critical text of Arius's *Thalia* if anybody could find a codex. Wiclif is in the same case with Luther, John Knox, Savonarola, and others—people never read their works or even look at them before they talk about them. As to Wiclif, he no doubt fell into errors, but I believe that he intended and believed himself to be a perfectly orthodox and devout Catholic priest, and that he was very little more of a Protestant than you or I.'"

If Lord Bute's verdict be correct as to Wycliffe, then the world could do with more such Roman Catholics. But unfortunately such is not the verdict of the Church of which the Marquis was so distinguished an ornament.

It was in 1884 that the five hundredth centenary

of Wycliffe's death was held, and occasion was taken of the celebration by the well-known Jesuit Father, Joseph Stevenson, to write his large and important volume, entitled *The Truth about John Wyclif, his Life, Writings, and Opinions, chiefly from the Evidence of his Contemporaries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1885). He selects two verdicts from well-known mediæval authorities who are supposed to have had not so much the ecclesiastical as the historic vision.

Adam of Usk writes thus: "England, and above all London and Bristol, stood corrupted, being infected by the seeds which one Master John Wyclif sowed, polluting as it were the faith with the tares of his baleful teaching. And the followers of this Master John, like Mahomet, by preaching things pleasing to the powerful and the rich,—namely, that the withholding of tithes and even of offerings, and the reaving of temporal things from the clergy, were praiseworthy; and to the young that self-indulgence was a virtue,—most wickedly did cast abroad murder, snares, strifes, variance and discords, which last to this day, and which I fear will last even to the undoing of the kingdom."[1] Walsingham's language is still more emphatic. According to his estimate, Wycliffe was "an organ of the devil, the enemy of the Church, the confusion of the people, the idol of the heretics, the mirror of the hypocrites, a promoter of schism, the sower of hatred, and the manufacturer of falsehood."

Father Stevenson has hardly a word to say in praise of anything which Wycliffe did or said or was,—which is not wonderful. He dismisses Lechler's "masterly production" and Montagu Barrows' "vague and

[1] *Chronicle*, p. 102.

declamatory" lectures on "Wyclif's place in History" with scant courtesy, and concludes his reference to the cheaper forms of Wycliffe literature with the words:

"Nothing need be said of the flood of sixpenny literature which has been issued by various Protestant societies and by private enterprise. They aim at one object only; and that is to keep alive, to foster, and if possible to embitter, the dislike and contempt which are too generally felt for the Catholic faith; and to represent John Wyclif as a benefactor to whom all owe a debt of gratitude, because he exerted himself through a long life in labouring to accomplish its overthrow."

After tracing his heretical tendencies to William Hughes, whom Walden terms "pædagogus nostri Wycliffi," and casting a whinstone at his memory as a communist and insurgent, Stevenson claims that Wycliffe was not the instigator of the vernacular English Bible, but that the Scripture incidents were common property long before his day, and that even the so-called "Wycliffe Bible" was the work of other people. The influence of this "morning star of the Reformation" was, in Stevenson's view, which is the view generally of the "Catholic Truth Society" and of the Italian Church in Britain generally, altogether malign and deadly. "Of Wycliffe personally we have been unable to form any exalted estimate. Intellectually there is little to admire about him. He was a voluminous author, and has left behind him a large mass of writings upon various subjects, thus supplying us with ample materials on which to form an estimate as to his mental capacity. These writings are remark-

able only as embodying numerous blasphemies, heresies, errors, and absurdities expressed in obscure language.

"Morally, he does not command our respect. He attacked the Church of which he was a priest, and in which he continued to minister long after he had denounced it as the synagogue of Satan. He rebelled against that ecclesiastical discipline which he had pledged himself to maintain and enforce. During many years he drew the revenues of his benefice, availing himself of an authority which he declared to be illegal and ungodly; and until the last day of his life he administered to others, and he himself received the Sacrament of the Eucharist according to a ritual which he denounced as false and blasphemous. His life must have been a daily lie, and he died as he was about to perpetrate an act of habitual mockery of the great Sacrifice of Calvary.

"The religious system which he succeeded in introducing among his countrymen proves upon examination to be a collection of errors and heresies, each of which had previously been condemned by the common voice of the Catholic Church. They were gleaned by him from that stock of falsehood against which believers had been warned by our Lord from the beginning; but, disregarding the caution, he picked them up, made them his own, and bequeathed this inheritance of evil to his native country. England accepted the legacy without knowing what it would cost her; but the knowlege has at last come. It is only after centuries of suffering and sin, of ignorance and rebellion, of heresy and schism, that our bitter experience enables us to estimate at its true value the work done by John Wyclif."

The estimates of Wycliffe by such Roman controversialists must be put opposite those of the Reformed Churches. It has been said that in Britain there is the Church most affected by the Reformation—the Scottish, and the Church least affected by the Reformation—the Anglican. The statement is a very erroneous one, and based on wrong facts. As a matter of fact, the two national Churches at the Reformation went hand in hand, and their articles are about equally plain in their statements as to Roman errors and papal supremacy. But even accepting the statement that the English Church has a cooler sympathy with the Reformers than her other Reformation sisters in Germany, Holland, Scotland, and elsewhere, it is remarkable that inside Lutterworth Church since 1833 the following inscription has stood on Wycliffe's monument:

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN WICLIF,
THE EARLIEST CHAMPION OF ECCLESIASTICAL REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.
HE WAS BORN IN YORKSHIRE IN THE YEAR 1324.
IN THE YEAR 1375 HE WAS PRESENTED TO THE RECTORY OF LUTTERWORTH: WHERE HE DIED ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER 1384.
AT OXFORD HE ACQUIRED NOT ONLY THE RENOWN OF A CONSUMMATE SCHOOLMAN, BUT THE FAR MORE GLORIOUS TITLE OF THE EVANGELIC DOCTOR.
HIS WHOLE LIFE WAS ONE PERPETUAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CORRUPTIONS AND ENCROACHMENTS OF THE PAPAL COURT, AND THE IMPOSTURES OF ITS DEVOTED AUXILIARIES, THE MENDICANT FRATERNITIES.
HIS LABOURS IN THE CAUSE OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH WERE CROWNED BY ONE IMMORTAL ACHIEVEMENT, HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO THE ENGLISH TONGUE.
THIS MIGHTY WORK DREW ON HIM, INDEED, THE BITTER HATRED OF ALL WHO WERE MAKING MERCHANDISE OF THE POPULAR CREDULITY AND IGNORANCE,

BUT HE FOUND AN ABUNDANT REWARD IN THE BLESSINGS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN OF EVERY RANK AND AGE, TO WHOM HE UNFOLDED THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.
HIS MORTAL REMAINS WERE INTERRED NEAR THIS SPOT; BUT THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO REST IN PEACE. AFTER THE LAPSE OF MANY YEARS, HIS BONES WERE DRAGGED FROM THE GRAVE, AND CONSIGNED TO THE FLAMES; AND HIS ASHES WERE CAST INTO THE WATERS OF THE ADJOINING STREAM."

And the majestic obelisk, thirty feet high, in the town, near the church erected in 1897 to commemorate the fifth centenary of the Reformer, bears the following inscription:

"JOHN WYCLIFFE,
BORN 1324. DIED 1384.
RECTOR OF LUTTERWORTH FROM 1374 TO 1384.
THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION.
THE FIRST TRANSLATOR OF THE BIBLE INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.
'SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.' 'THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT.'
'BE FOLLOWERS OF THEM WHO THRO' FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES.'
'BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.'
ERECTED IN THE 60TH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA."

June, 1897.

It has been beautifully suggested that neither of these memorials is so truly redolent or suggestive of his memory as "the steep and pebbly path, down which the remains of Wycliffe were carried to the water and the rapid little stream (as we saw it eddying and sparkling in the sunlight of a spring morning), constitute, to thoughtful minds, the most expressive memorial of the earliest—and probably the greatest—of Ecclesiastical Reformers!"

PART II

THE LOLLARDS

CHAPTER I

Lollardism in England

While the Lollards were said to have got their name from a German word meaning "tares"—from their heretical position and views—it is said with greater appearance of truth that the disciples of Wycliffe were called "Lollards" from their singing in a low or hushed voice—from the German "*lollen*" = psalm-singers, or from Walter Lollardus, who on the Continent taught his principles. The Lollard preachers went about England in couples, clad in russet gowns, preaching at fairs, in market-places and churches and houses, teaching the simple truths of primitive Christianity with zeal and simplicity.

At any rate, the influence and principles of Wycliffe were not allowed to die, but, on the contrary, spread with such amazing vitality that it became a proverb that every second man you met in England was a Lollard. About a fourth of the nation was supposed to be in sympathy with Wycliffe views by the close of the fourteenth century. At any rate, there seems to have been a general feeling that reform in some way

or another was a necessity: the luxury and excesses of the friars, the persecutions of the hierarchy and the scandal of a divided papacy, shocked all right-thinking people, and produced a movement towards reform. Lechler declares that the name of Lollard was not generally given to Wycliffe's followers until 1385, the year after the Reformer's death, and that it came from the Netherlands, having been first applied to the "Brothers of St. Alexius" or "fratres Cellitæ," whose works of love and ministries of kindness were famous. The name, at any rate, whether derived from the mythical Walter Lollard, from the "frates Cellitæ," from the "tares," or the "singing," became in course of time the universal title of a sect which had gradually grown into great power and importance.

Wycliffe's "poor preachers" or "poor priests" appear on the scene somewhere about 1382, when Courtenay, archbishop of Canterbury, in a mandate to the Bishop of London, refers to "certain unauthorised itinerant preachers, who, as he had happily been compelled to learn, set forth erroneous, yea, heretical assertions in public sermons; and they do this under guise of great holiness, but without having obtained any episcopal or papal authorisation." In several tracts of this period Wycliffe defends his itinerants. The headquarters of the order seems to have been at Oxford. Thorpe, who was tried by Archbishop Arundel, said in his evidence that "Maister John Wycliffe was holden of full many men the greatest clerk that they knew then living, and therewith he was named a passing ruly man and innocent in his living." Thorpe adds the names

of several whom he also admired—John Aston, Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and others, with whom he had been on terms of close intimacy and personal friendship. This intimacy was enjoyed probably at Oxford and not at Lutterworth. In his books on *The Pastoral Office,* and *Why Poor Priests have no Benefices,* Wycliffe defends his wandering preachers as preferable to parish priests who do not preach, but at the same time he defends the parish priests who do so.

Thorpe was a priest himself, and declares: "By the authority of the word of God and also of many saints and doctors, I have been brought to the conviction that it is the office and duty of every priest faithfully, freely, and truly to preach God's Word. Without doubt it behoves every priest in determining to take orders, to do so chiefly with the object of preaching the Word of God to the people to the best of his ability. We are accordingly bound by Christ's command and holy example, and also by the testimony of His holy apostles and prophets, under heavy penalties, to exercise ourselves in such wise as to fulfil this duty of the priesthood to the best of our knowledge and powers. We believe that every priest is commanded by the Word of God to make God's will known to the people by faithful labour, and to publish it to them in the spirit of love, to the best of our ability, where, when, and to whomsoever we may."

Wycliffe's preachers were both priests and laymen. In his *Speculum Ecclesiæ Militantis* he boldly declares that a single unlearned preacher with grace in his heart and the fire of the divine spirit on his lips can often effect more than those who have the

hall-mark of the universities and the colleges. In coarse red or russet woollen cloth, staff in hand as became pilgrims, they wandered over the land, preaching a simple gospel and diligently explaining the Scriptures to the people. In forcible language they rebuked the sins of lofty and lowly, and lifted up before the eyes of the people the Perfect Life. Several of Wycliffe's tracts on these itinerant preachers are very suggestive, notably—*Of Good Preaching Priests, Why Poor Priests have no Benefices, Of Feigned Contemplative Life, Of Obedience to Prelates, The Mirror of Antichrist,* and *The Six Yokes,* a little book prepared for the preachers themselves, and a guide to them as to how and what to preach. In his *Saints' Day Sermons* he gives outlines of discourses evidently intended as skeletons to be filled in by the individual speakers themselves with matter suitable to the time, place, and people. "The itinerant preacher" movement had its chief activity from 1370–1382, and in the districts immediately around Oxford and Lutterworth its strongest hold.

Some of these notable preachers call for attention. The nucleus of the party consisted of Nicholas of Hereford, John Aston, John Purvey, John Parker, William Swinderby, William Smith, and Richard Waytstathe. Philip Repyngdon, once a warm supporter of the Reformer, recanted and turned against the Lollards, being afterwards made, strange to say—as if to befool the See which once was held by Grossetête—Bishop of Lincoln in 1405, and finally died as a cardinal.

Nicholas of Hereford, the learned doctor of theology

who assisted Wycliffe in the translation more especially of the Old Testament, became after the Reformer's death the leader of the movement. John Aston, like Repyngdon, deserted the Lollard ranks, but repented and became one of the most outstanding of the preachers. Wycliffe's old curate at Lutterworth, John Purvey, who also actively assisted him in his Bible translation and revised the whole book, finishing the final revision in 1388, is named by Knighton as one of "the four arch-heretics"—a plain homely man with sound common-sense, great force of character, and warm zeal in preaching the gospel.

John Parker is referred to by the Bishop of Worcester in his letter of 1387. William Smith was an ordinary citizen, who, it is said, having been disappointed in love, threw himself with zeal and energy into the ascetic life. William Swinderby was originally a hermit, and coming to Leicester preached against the luxury of the age, the deterioration of the priesthood, and the general decadence of the world. From his pulpit of two millstones in the High Street of Leicester he addressed crowds of anxious souls, and finally was cited to appear before the Bishop of Lincoln to answer for heresies, "for which," it was said to him, "you deserve to be made fuel for fire." Removed to Coventry, he preached with even greater vigour; and the multitude prevented any action being taken by the Church against him. Next he retired to Herefordshire, where the bishop of that diocese instituted proceedings against him in 1391.

"William the Hermit" had associated with him "Richard the Chaplain," or Richard Waytstathe, who

formerly was of the Augustinian Church in Leicester, and these two ardently preached the Lollard faith both in Leicester and elsewhere.

While these "poor preachers" had little of this world's goods, and answer to the description given by the Roman historian Reinerus in the thirteenth century of the heretics of that age, "They admit of no pride of dress; riches they seek not to multiply, but they are content with things necessary; they are always engaged either in working or in learning or in teaching,"—on the other hand, their adherents included many men and families of weight, worth, and distinction in England. The Earl of Salisbury, Sir Thomas Latimer in Northamptonshire, Sir John Russell in Staffordshire, Sir Lewis Clifford, Durham (who intervened at the Lambert Council in 1378), Sir Richard Story, Sir Reginald Hilton (Durham), Sir William Neville, third son of Lord Neville, besides large numbers of persons in middle life possessed of means and influence, all stood by and aided the itinerant preachers.

By preaching and by disseminating the Scriptures in whole or in parts, the cause was spread and the Lollard influence daily strengthened. For Forshall and Madden's *Wycliffite Versions* a hundred and fifty MSS. were consulted, and twelve of these were of a date earlier than 1400. They are of all kinds, some costly, some bare and poor, but all well worn and well used. These MSS. gave the preachers their theme; and even Roman bishops acknowledged the good and power of their sermons, though Lingard says they were only controversial. The Roman Chronicler Knighton describes their method of procedure:—

"When an itinerant preacher arrived at the residence of some knight, the latter immediately with great willingness set about calling together the country people to some appointed place or church in order to hear the sermon; even if they did not care about going, they did not dare to stay away or to object. For the knight was always at the preacher's side, armed with sword and shield, ready to protect him should anyone dare to oppose in any way his person or his doctrine. Their teaching was at the beginning full of sweetness and devotion; but towards the end it broke into jealousy and calumny. Nobody, they said, was upright and pleasing to God who did not hold the Word of God as they preached it, for thus in all their preaching did they hold up God's Law."

Preaching in the open air or wherever they could obtain a hearing, the Bible was also read with perhaps a tract by Wycliffe or Hereford expounding its meaning, and thus people learned how to hear and read the Scripture, until, finally, it became quite familiar to the common people, who heard and read it gladly.

Richard II. was at this time King of England, and frowned upon the Lollards; but though persecution was used to stamp out the movement, the death-sentence for heresy had not yet made its appearance; and this was due doubtless to the influence of the Duke of Lancaster, the great patron of Wycliffe, and of Richard's queen, Anne of Bohemia and sister of the King of Bohemia, who strongly favoured the new movement, read the Scripture in English, and through her strong personal influence introduced Lollardy into Bohemia, where it had a striking career, as we shall see by and by.

In 1387 Peter Pateshull, an Augustinian friar, left the cloister and became a Lollard, preaching against the monastic life, which he declared was in every way inferior morally and spiritually to the life of a good citizen. At last his old associates, the Augustinians, waxed furious at his revelations of their life by one who knew it, and a party of twelve of them interrupted the preacher, with the result that the Lollards rose and drove them off, even threatening to burn their monastery. Pateshull wrote his charges down and affixed the document to St. Paul's Cathedral, as Luther did with his theses.

In 1391 Walter Brute had pled the Lollard cause before the Bishop of Hereford, arguing very much against the same points. In Chaucer's "Plowman's Tale," a picture is given of Church and Lollard ways of thinking and acting which agrees with these petitions; while in "Piers Plowman's Creed" the seeker after truth is repelled by the pride and vices of the clerical orders, and at last takes his gospel from the lips of a simple son of the soil.

In 1395 the Lollards petitioned Parliament, declaring their doctrines and asking for reforms, but received scant consideration. Their chief conclusions were,—that the Church's great temporalities had killed religion; that the present priesthood comes not from Christ but from Rome; that priestly celibacy, auricular confession, transubstantiation, exorcisms, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, perpetual vows, are all wrong and unscriptural.

In 1396 Archbishop Courtenay died, and Thomas Arundel was changed from York to Canterbury; and one of his earliest acts was to convene a council

(February 1397) to deal with the Lollard heresies as more particularly laid down in Wycliffe's *Trialogus*. Eighteen articles were condemned, referring mainly to Church properties, worldly priests and government, and doctrine. An old enemy of Wycliffe was commissioned to write a tract against the Lollard heresies, which he did in a scholastic manner: this was William Woodford, a learned Franciscan, whose *Tractate against the Errors of Wycliffe in the Trialogus* was the result. But no drastic action was taken against Lollards as yet. Not until 1396 was persecution resorted to, when in that year four men from Nottingham recanted before the King's Court of Justice. Changes of a revolutionary character were in the air: in 1397 Archbishop Arundel was banished for conspiracy and treason in complicity with his brother the Earl of Arundel, and was succeeded as Primate by Roger of Walden. The year 1399 saw the deposition of Richard II., and the Duke of Lancaster, son of John of Gaunt, ascended the throne as Henry IV. The banished Archbishop Arundel was reinstated, and through political circumstances the King, who owed his position to the hierarchy, felt called upon to repay the debt by persecuting the Church's old enemies. A violent persecution of the Lollards, instigated by archbishop and King, began, and for the first time in history England beheld the spectacle of martyrs being burned alive for their religious beliefs. The Act "De hæretico comburendo" was placed on the Statute Book of England, and power was given to bishops to arrest suspects, and, if necessary, to hand them over to the civil power, "to be by them burned on an high place before the people." It was in this case as in many others that men were more zealous to

persecute others for their faith than to make sacrifices to prove their own; but as well might they wring the neck of the crowing cock and think that day would never come, as imagine that the mowing down of the grass would not prevent its more rapid growth, for the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

The first Lollard to suffer death for his beliefs was William Sawtree, priest of St. Osyth's, London. He had previously, when priest of St. Margaret's, Lynn, recanted before the Bishop of Norwich; but in London he again openly avowed his faith, and on 12th February 1401 was summoned to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury. The chief charges against him were that "he would not worship the cross on which Christ suffered, but only Christ who suffered on the cross; that every priest and deacon is more bound to preach the Word of God than to say particular services at the canonical hours; and that after the pronouncing of the sacramental words of the body of Christ, the bread remaineth of the same nature that it was before, neither doth it cease to be bread." After two days' discussion with him on the nature of the Eucharist, he was declared a heretic, on 24th February brought to St. Paul's Cathedral and publicly stripped of his sacerdotal robes and handed over to the High Constable and Marshal of England to be dealt with. Early in March, Sawtree was burned at Smithfield—the first of the Lollard martyrs, as Henry IV. was the first King who allowed punishment by death to be given for religious beliefs. The Continent had for several centuries known what this meant: as early as 1017 several canons of Orleans Cathedral in France suffered death by burning for heresy, and the Dominicans in

the thirteenth century received strong inquisitorial powers from the Holy Office to destroy heretics by fire. But until 1401 the thing was unknown in the British Isles.

The destruction of Sawtree made a terrible impression upon John Purvey, Wycliffe's old curate, whose heart at last failed him for fear, and on 5th March 1401 he recanted before the archbishop's commissioners, and publicly read his recantation at St. Paul's Cross on Sunday, 6th March, to the great grief of his old friends. He seems to have returned to Lollard principles again, for in 1421 Archbishop Chichely proceeded against him again for heresy.

The effort to exterminate Wycliffe ideas was earnestly undertaken by the ecclesiastical powers in England, and more particularly in London, Rochester, Oxford, Nottingham, Norwich, Bristol, and Worcester. John Badby, an Evesham tailor in the last-named diocese, was in 1409 arraigned before Archbishop Arundel and the rest of the ecclesiastical court for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation; and as if to bring supernatural aid to his assistance, Arundel declared to Badby that if he would only be true to the Church's doctrine, he would himself pledge his soul for him at the Judgment-day. But Badby declared that the bread was only the symbol, not the corporeal presence of Christ, "and that if every host being consecrated at the altar were the Lord's body, then there would be twenty thousand gods in England." On 15th March he was called before his judges, declared a heretic, passed on to the civil authorites, and led to Smithfield to be burned. The Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V., was present, and urged Badby to

recant. Bound with iron chains to a stake with piles of dry wood and an oil-cask around him, the Prior of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, with a retinue passed the stake, carrying lighted torches and in the midst the host. Asked what he believed that host to be, Badby said he "knew well it was hallowed bread and not God's body." The fire was kindled, and the blaze began, when the Prince of Wales, thinking that the singe would do its work, ordered the fire to be extinguished, which was done, and once more begged Badby to recant, offering also money and favours, but to no purpose. The fire was rekindled, and England's second religious martyr met his doom with courage and constancy.

Still pursuing a policy of the utmost rigour, Archbishop Arundel managed to shake the constancy of some. Some recanted, others died in prison, while others met their fiery death, one of them—John Resby, a Wycliffite from England, being put to death in Scotland in 1407,—the first person who suffered death in that country for heresy. Arundel formulated an order of proceedings by which for the first offence the heretic was excommunicated, and for the second condemned to burning. He also forbade the reading of the Scriptures in English or in any other language, or of books of religion unless permission were first had of the ordinary, adding that it was "a dangerous thing to translate the text of Holy Scripture out of one tongue into another."

William Thorpe was an outstanding victim of Arundel's persecuting zeal, chiefly owing to his eminence and abilities as a priest.

For twenty years he had been an itinerant preacher

in Northern England, when in 1397 he was seized in London, but liberated on Arundel's banishment. In 1407 he was again seized, and imprisoned in Saltwood Castle in Kent. The archbishop interrogated him, and advised him to recant. Tyndale nearly two centuries later published the account of these interrogations, which the reforming party greatly valued,—a work prohibited by royal proclamation in 1530, but preserved by Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*. Regarding transubstantiation Thorpe referred to Scripture. As to the worship of images, he declared that not only that practice, but confession, pilgrimages, and other ecclesiastical uses were wholly unscriptural. After his condemnation he declared—"To witness to the truth of my convictions I am ready in humility and in joy to suffer my poor body to be persecuted where God wills, and by whom and when and for how long a time, and to endure whatever punishment and death that He sees fit to the honour of His Name and to the building up of the Church." The registers do not state that he was burned, but he was probably done to death or died of sickness in prison. John Ashton had previously come to a similar end for his Lollard heresies as to the sacrament of the altar.

About this time Archbishop Arundel sent a mandate to the Bishop of London requiring men to say prayers to the Virgin at the sound of the curfew bell. He declares—"We truly, as servants of her own inheritance, and such as are written of to be her peculiar dower, ought more watchfully than others to show our devotion in praising her, who being hitherto merciful to us (yea, being even cowards) would that our power, being spread through all the coasts of the world,

should, with a victorious arm, fear all foreign nations. That our power being on all sides so defended with the buckler of her protection, did subdue unto our victorious standards, and made subject unto us, nations both near at hand and far off. We grant by these presents to all and every man who shall say the Lord's Prayer and the Salutation of the Angel five times at the morning peal, with a devout mind, forty days' pardon." Archbishop Arundel's capricious arrangements were almost unbearable. In one city he forbade the organs to be used in church because the bells were not rung one morning as he unexpectedly passed through. He was a thoroughgoing believer in the unique power of the Vicar of Christ—"the key-bearer and porter of eternal life and death, bearing the place and person not of a mere man, but of true God here upon earth." And this at a time when there were rival Popes,—at one time three of them, who excommunicated each other, and were finally all declared heretics and deposed by general councils.

On 6th October 1406 the University of Oxford put forth a document regarding Wycliffe and his teachings, which owed its origin to the report which widely circulated in Bohemia and the Continent generally, that the English bishops had declared him a heretic, and had ordered his bones to be dug up and burned. The genuineness of the document has been challenged, but it seems to have been issued in the name of the chancellor and regents of the university, and was sealed with the common seal, and copies transmitted to Bohemia and elsewhere.

This testimony of Oxford University to Wycliffe says: "The conduct of Wycliffe even from tender

years to the time of his death, was so praiseworthy and honourable, that never at any time was there any offence given by him, nor was he aspersed with any note of infamy or sinister suspicion: but in answering, reading, preaching, determining, he behaved himself laudably: and as a valiant champion of the truth, he vanquished by proofs from Holy Scripture and according to the Catholic Faith those who by wilful beggary blasphemed the religion of Christ. Never was this doctor convicted of heretical depravity, nor was he delivered by our prelates to be burned after his burial. For, God forbid that our bishops should have condemned so good and upright a man as a heretic, who in all the university had not his equal, as they believed, in his writings on logic, philosophy, theology, ethics, and the speculative sciences." In 1411 the Convocation of the province of Canterbury stigmatised this testimony as "a letter of falsehood"; but this evidently refers to the false doctrine of Wycliffe, not to the forgery of the letter. The letter certainly expresses the feeling of Oxford at the time it was written, and even Convocation itself complained of heresies and errors prevalent, Arundel himself in 1408 declaring that where once the vine grew, there were now only thistles. In that visitation of the colleges Archbishop Arundel arranged that every month the inmates be examined by the heads regarding their soundness in the Chūrch's faith, and if heresy were found there was to be first warning and then expulsion and excommunication. Arundel in 1411 revisited Oxford to insist on these reforms as he thought them. In 1414 the reactionary spirit had triumphed in the university, and after Henry V. ascended the throne the

college heads presented to His Majesty a memorial in which they promised to do all they could to crush Lollardism. Wycliffe had been dead thirty years, and the severe measures taken by Arundel and the bishops to stamp out Lollardism from Oxford University seem to have triumphed, and the reactionary movement again was in the ascendancy to the destruction of Wycliffism. Oxford thereafter began to decline: the papal scholasticism killed original thinking, and for more than a hundred years the university was dead so far as things of the mind and soul were concerned. The old, fresh, original vitality, scholarship and character infused into the beautiful homes by the Isis by the saintly scholar and his associates were dried up, and the university life for a century was destitute of originality, force, freshness, and moral power. The Church was not everywhere destitute of life and aspiration. The Renaissance spirit was abroad, and Dante and Petrarch and Fra Angelico had been dreaming their dreams and bidding Europe arise and shine. It was in the very year of Arundel's second visit to Oxford that the University of St. Andrews was founded (1411), and James I. of Scotland gave to the world the *King's Quair* only a few years later. Intellectual and soul-life were struggling after a wider freedom, which eventually was given; but the reactionary spirit again gripped the centre of England's intellectual life, and Oxford relapsed into the dead mechanicalism which existed before the freshness of Wycliffe's spirit bade the dry bones live. The spirit of Chaucer, who died in 1400, interpreted the aspirations of the people, it is true, but the ecclesiastical authorities set their faces as a whole against any

slackening of the swaddling-clothes of mediæval scholasticism.

Henry IV. died in 1413, and his son Henry V. succeeded him. Archbishop Arundel died the following year—the memorable year in which the Council of Constance held its first sittings. Henry Chichely was anointed Archbishop of Canterbury, and renewed Arundel's onslaught on Lollardism with fresh zeal. At Arundel's synod in St. Paul's, held in 1413 to combat the spreading Wycliffe heresy, an outstanding offender often referred to was Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, who was a warm friend of the Lollards, spread Wycliffe's Scriptures and writings vigorously abroad, and generally supported the much-needed reform of the Church. When Henry V. heard read to him one of Wycliffe's writings found in the possession of Lord Cobham, he declared that he had never heard such heresy, but bade them pause in proceeding against him until he himself had had an opportunity of conversing with him and convincing him of his errors. When the King had urged upon him the duty of obeying Holy Church, Cobham replied: "As touching the Pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, as I know him by the Scriptures to be the great Antichrist, the Son of Perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." At last Arundel sent his chief summoner to Cowling Castle in Kent, the seat of Lord Cobham, and demanded his submission. Availing himself, however, of the special privileges of an English noble, Cobham declined, and continued entertaining the Lollard preachers and pressing forward the Lollard cause. The archbishop then caused his

citation to be posted at the gates of Rochester Cathedral, and passed sentence of excommunication upon "the good Lord Cobham," as he was affectionately styled by the common people, and called upon the civil power to deal with him.

To clear himself, Lord Cobham prepared a paper summing up his imdividual confession of faith; and, obtaining an audience of the King, presented his paper and begged His Majesty to read it over and judge for himself how far he was right or wrong. Under Arundel's strong influence, however, the King refused to read it, but ordered that it should be handed over to the archbishop. The archbishop's summons was read over to Cobham in the royal presence. Cobham appealed to the Pope; but the King would not suffer it, and ordered his immediate arrest, which was done in the King's presence, whence he was taken to the Tower of London, a portion of which is still called to this day the "Cobham Tower." On 23rd September 1413 he was brought before the prelates in the chapter-house of St. Paul's. Arundel told him of his summons and sentence of excommunication; but, standing in wholesome dread of the people, with whom Cobham was exceedingly popular, he offered to give him absolution if he submitted. In answer, Cobham read his defence, or more accurately the statement of his views, namely: "1. That the sacrament of the altar is Christ's body in the form of bread. 2. As to penance, it is needful for every man that shall be saved, to forsake sin and to do penance for former sins, with true confession, real contrition, and due satisfaction, as God's law teaches. 3. That images were permitted by the Church to represent to ignorant

men the death and sufferings of Christ, and that whosoever worshipped them became an idolater. 4. As to pilgrimages, every man was a pilgrim to bliss or woe, and that he who knew not God and kept not His commandments would be damned although he went on all the pilgrimages in the world; while those who knew the will of God and kept it would be saved, though they never went on any pilgrimage as men go to Canterbury or Rome or other places."

Archbishop Arundel in his suave manner declared that Cobham's paper contained many good things, but said he wished to inquire further to his views upon the sacraments and confession. Cobham said he stood by his confession in writing; and after a few more days in prison, and on being brought up again, he was asked "whether there remained material bread in the sacrament after the words of consecration or not." Arundel promised to send him in writing the determinations of the Church on the various disputed points, which he did, summing up the Church's faith under four heads: 1. A clear statement of transubstantiation—the bread and wine disappearing as such after consecration. 2. The duty of confession by every Christian. 3. Christ gave His power to St. Peter, and through him to all his successors in the Holy See, who ought therefore to be implicitly obeyed as Christ's Vicars. 4. Pilgrimages are meritorious, and the worship of images and relics of the saints and martyrs is a duty.

On the Monday his trial was resumed at the Dominican Convent, Ludgate. Exposed to the taunts and insults of a crowd of monks and friars, he was again offered absolution, but declined. Kneeling down

on the pavement, he raised his hands to heaven and said: "I confess myself here unto Thee, my eternal living God, that in my frail youth I offended Thee, O Lord, most grievously by pride, wrath, covetousness, lust, intemperance. Many men have I injured in mine anger and done other horrible sins: good Lord, I ask Thee mercy!" Standing up with tears in his eyes, he exclaimed loudly: "Lo, good people, lo, for breaking of God's law, and His great commandments, these men never yet cursed me; but for their own laws and traditions most cruelly do they handle me and other men. Therefore, both they and their laws, according to the promise of God, shall be utterly destroyed." There was a great scene of confusion among the clerics and friars and monks at this appeal from St. Peter to the people of England, and only after a time was the archbishop able to resume his examination. Asked as to his belief, Cobham said: "I believe fully and faithfully in the laws of God. I believe that all is true which is contained in the sacred Scriptures of the Bible. Finally, I believe all that my Lord God would have me believe." Asked as to his views on the real presence on the altar, he gave as his final decision: "The Scriptures make no mention of material bread. In the sacrament there is both Christ's body and the bread: the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes; but the body of Christ is hid, and only seen by faith." At once all present cried out that it was heresy. With perfect calmness Cobham went through further examination. Friar Palmer asked him if he would worship the cross on which Christ died; and Cobham said that it was not the cross which should be worshipped, but Him who suffered and died upon it.

Cobham was then condemned: declared a heretic in the matter of the real presence, penance, papal power, and pilgrimages, and the sentence of condemnation concluded with the statement that the judges had imitated Christ, "who willeth nor the death of a sinner, but rather that he might be converted and live." This was after Arundel's most unctuous style; for his practice was to cover his malignity with a seraphic smile, and veil his judgments with suavity and sweetness. The registers at Lambeth Palace state that "he made use of the most sweet and gentle terms in addressing the prisoner: and that when he found his endeavours to reclaim him in vain, he was compelled to pronounce sentence, and he did so with the bitterest sorrow." After hearing his sentence, with perfect composure and cheerfulness Cobham addressed the judges thus: "Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am certain and sure ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than Satan did to the soul of Job. He that created it will of His infinite mercy and according to His promise save it. Of this I have no manner of doubt: and as concerning the articles of my belief, by the grace of the eternal God I will stand to them even to the very death." Turning to the people, he said: "Good Christian people, for God's love be well aware of these men, else they will beguile you and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." Falling on his knees, with hands and eyes towards heaven, he prayed: "Lord God eternal, I beseech Thee of Thy great mercy's sake to forgive my persecutors, if it be Thy blessed will." He was then removed to the Tower awaiting his death warrant; but serene in that virtue which is bold and

that goodness which is never fearful, and contemplating not so much the number or quality of the opponents as the equity of the cause in the eyes of the Eternal Judge. For himself, he was of the stuff of which martyrs are made; and in his view good lives were like sea-water, never perfectly sweet till drawn upwards to heaven. Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful, and the best hearts are the bravest.

Cobham, however, had many friends: indeed, had this not been the case quicker work would have been made of him by the ecclesiastical authorities. "A man of integrity, dearly beloved by the King," as the historian describes him, all eyes were fastened on his fate. False rumours declared he had recanted, and Cobham contradicted them. Delay after delay took place in the carrying out of the sentence; and, availing himself of a dark night, he escaped from the Tower and fled into Wales, where he remained concealed for a time.

The screw of persecution received another twist, and the Lollard folk were forbidden to assemble,—an injunction which they, like the faithful in the catacombs and the soldier-harried on the Scottish moors, disobeyed, meeting in small groups often at dead of night. On the 7th of January 1414 a company of them gathered in St. Giles' Fields, then a country copse with thickets and brushwood, though now covered with a network of busy streets, where the bird-stuffer, the saddler, and the antiquary have their special home, in the midst of which stands Wren's Church, where the dreamer of *Paradise Lost* and *Regained* takes his last sleep.

The impression was abroad that Cobham would be

there. The enemies of the Lollards tried to use this incident to stir up the King's dislike against them by insinuating that it was the beginning of a rebellion. The King, who was at Eltham, was informed that Lord Cobham was at St. Giles' Fields at the head of 20,000 Lollards, who intended to seize the King's person, destroy Cobham's persecutors, and place him on the throne of England. At once Henry v. assembled his nearest troops and marched to the place, where only a few poor Lollards were assembled, probably for praise and prayer. The city gates were closed. It was thought that the London Lollards and the country ones intended on that night to combine. Arrived at the scene, Henry and his *bijou* army attacked the meeting: twenty were killed and sixty taken prisoners: he advanced farther, thinking to meet the real Lollard army, having routed the advanced guard; but the army was non-existent. In the end, thirty-nine Lollards were condemned and burned or hanged in St. Giles' Fields, on the ground of having conspired against the King and devised not only his death, but the destruction of the royal princes and many civil and spiritual dignitaries. Lord Cobham does not seem to have been there, but advantage was taken of the incident to pass a bill of attainder against him, and to offer a reward of 1000 merks for his arrest, and a boon of perpetual exemption from taxes to the town whose inhabitants should first secure him. Among the thirty-nine Lollard victims were Sir George Acton, Beverley a preacher, Browne a knight, and William Murle a wealthy brewer of Dunstaple.

Agincourt was fought in 1415, and Henry v. returned to England flushed with his victories. In

In the fall of the year 1417 Cobham was arrested in Wales by Lord Powis and brought to London, and indicted on the charge of instigating rebellion in January 1414. Cobham knew he was doomed, and being asked for his defence he replied: "With me it is a small matter that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment," after which he was sentenced to be hanged as a traitor and burned as a heretic. He was dragged upon a hurdle with every barbarity and insult to St. Giles' Fields, hung alive on chains between two gallows, a fire kindled below him, and so slowly roasted to death. He had before his execution exhorted the Lollards to stand firm in the Scriptures, and to have nothing to do with false teachers. As long as life lasted he continued praising God and blessing His Holy Name. It was a cruel fate, nothing short of murder, for his hands were clean of conspiracy or treason in any form against his sovereign and government.

Lord Cobham was undoubtedly the most illustrious victim in the Lollard cause up till now, and after his death Lollardism seemed to decline, mainly through the stern measures taken to repress it. Their political aspect disappeared for the most part, and henceforth they were persecuted as religious heretics. In 1415 John Claydona, furrier, was accused before Archbishop Chichely of heresy, there having been found in his possession a booklet called *The Lanthorn of Light*, which pointed out various Roman errors; and though this man could neither read nor write it was written out at his expense, and he declared that "many things he had heard from this look which were profitable, good, and healthful to his soul." Along with a baker, Richard Turning, he was burned at Smithfield.

In 1416 Chichely, following Arundel's policy of extirpation, issued a mandate requiring that in every parish, twice every year, three persons should be examined on oath and required to give information as to any persons within the bounds who had suspected books, held conventicles, or encouraged Lollardism in any way. If such suspects were discovered, they were to be burned or imprisoned until the next convocation of the clergy.

In 1422 Henry V. died in his very prime of life and vigour, and the infant Henry VI. succeeded, his Regents being John of Bedford and Humphrey of Gloucester. These latter showed little desire to prosecute the Lollards, though in the first year of the regency a priest in the diocese of Canterbury, William Taylor, was burned at Bristol for heresy. He stated that only God is to be worshipped and not the saints, and that "to pray to any creature is to commit idolatry." After examination by the friars he was degraded from his priesthood; cup and paten, gospel and tunicle, epistles and cruet, candlestick and key, surplice and tonsure were in turn removed from him, and finally he was burned.

In 1424 a plain turner residing in Norfolk, John Florence, was charged with heresy as to the Pope's authority and the worship of images. Brought before the chancellor of the diocese, he submitted and did penance for three Sundays in Norwich Cathedral, and for other three in his own parish church at Shelton, being disciplined with a rod before all the people, clothed in canvas shirt and breeches, and carrying a lighted taper in his hand. In the diocese of Norwich the measures taken against the Lollards at this time

were specially severe, and altogether a hundred and twenty names are recorded of those who in this district were burned or punished in some way between 1424 and 1431; and the striking thing about them all is the practical unanimity of their beliefs and principles.

In 1424 a priest of the name of William White, a learned and upright clerk, who, having imbibed the Lollard faith, gave up his orders, and, having married, continued his ministry in preaching, teaching, and writing. The same views characterised him as his predecessors,—God, not man, can forgive sins; image-worship is unscriptural, and the Pope is not the friend, but the enemy of God's truth. Greatly reverenced by the people, he was, however, tried and condemned, and burned at Norwich in September 1424. In the bishop's register mention is made of John Baker who was charged with having in his possession a book in English containing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and Hail Mary. Margaret Backster was charged with cooking bacon in Lent and with denying the efficacy of crucifix-worship. The spirit of the Crusades was in the air, and the cross was on every breast; while as if to emphasise the efficacy of the holy symbol the following addition to the bidding prayer before sermon was regularly used: "Ye shall pray for the Holy Land and for the Holy Cross that Jesus Christ died upon, for the redemption of men's souls, that it may come into the power of Christian men to be honoured by our prayers."

The possession of heretical books was a punishable offence. Nicholas Belward bought in London a New Testament for which he paid £2, 16s. 8d. (about £20 to-day), and was charged with heresy. The registers of

Norwich are full of similar cases at this period, and in Wilkins' *Concilia* the form of many of these accusations is preserved, the "mad opinions" of the sectaries being often referred to. But while isolated cases of persecution were to be met with all over England during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, it was not really until 1428 that the most vigorous attack came. Wycliffe died peacefully in 1384, and was buried in the chancel of Lutterworth Church. In 1415 the Council of Constance passed a decree condemning forty-five articles of Wycliffism, and ordered that as an obstinate heretic his bones should be dug up, burned, and thrown upon a dunghill; much in the same manner as the Portuguese sailors castigate the effigy of Judas Iscariot on Good Friday, or as a little child beats the chair or table which has given it hurt and annoyance. Year after year passed, and this childish decree was never carried out. In 1428, however, acting evidently on local knowledge, the Pope, Clement VIII., gave orders that this decree should be executed, probably as a warning to England and Bohemia, which had also through royal relationship become impregnated with Lollard ideas. Fleming was then Bishop of Lincoln, and at Lutterworth his officers saw Wycliffe's ashes unearthed and thrown into the Swift close by, and thence carried, according to the almost proverbial expression, into the river and the sea and the ocean, and so round the world—like Wycliffe's doctrines.

Not content, however, with dishonouring the bones of the founder of the Lollards, Bishop Fleming took active measures in counteracting the Lollard teaching, and in 1426 founded Lincoln College in Oxford, with a view of training men specially to counteract the

Wycliffe teachings. Fleming was born at Crofton near Wakefield in Yorkshire, and matriculated at University College. At first he zealously espoused the Wycliffe doctrines, but subsequently revoked, and became as zealous and more so in the other direction. To dispel the "pernicious doctrines" of Wycliffe was the object of his foundation at Oxford—"The College of the Blessed Virgin and of All Saints in the University of Oxford." It was a poor institution to begin with,—a rector and seven fellows, but became wealthy and vigorous, holding several rectories in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. In later years Lincoln College was the *alma mater* of Bishop Sanderson (1660), who mainly wrote the prefaces to the English Prayer-Book; of Nathaniel Lord Crewe, bishop of Oxford, the princely prelate of Bamburgh Castle; of Fuller the Church historian, John Wesley the founder of Methodism, Hervey of the *Meditation amongst the Tombs*, Brett and Kilbye the Bible translators, Tindal the deist, Mark Pattison of the *Essays and Reviews*, and Bishop Fraser, the many-sided prelate of Manchester. The library includes a copy of Wycliffe's Bible in MS. Several Lollards, according to Froude, were imprisoned in the Treasury; while Thomas Garrett of Magdalene, an early Reformer in Oxford, escaped from the rector's lodgings while the rector was at service in the chapel.

Bishop Fleming, who caused Wycliffe's ashes to be thus burned and dispersed, acted as the Pope's direct agent; and the action was intended as a lesson not to England only, but to the Continent as well. The Lollard doctrines were vigorous in Bohemia, mainly through the fact of Queen Anne, the wife of Richard II. of England, having been a sister of the King of Bohemia,

and a zealous follower of Wycliffe. She eagerly read Wycliffe's Bible and works in English, encouraged students from Bohemia to come to Oxford for instruction and spiritual light and guidance, and thus Lollardism was brought to Bohemia, where it flourished so vigorously that the Church took alarm, and thought it necessary to make a public exhibition of its abhorrence of the Wycliffe doctrines by scattering Wycliffe's ashes. The same Council of Constance which gave the order to do this, also withdrew the cup from the laity in the sacrament of the Supper, and condemned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, the Bohemian representatives of Lollardism, to the flames.

In 1428 the Bishop of Winchester, Henry of Beaufort, a legitimised son of the famous John of Gaunt, who was therefore grand-uncle to the child King, was created a cardinal by the Pope, and solemnly ordered to institute a crusade against the Lollards in Bohemia. The Lollards were strong in that country, so strong, indeed, that the papal nuncio referred, in his charge to the English bishops, to the "oppression of the orthodox by the heretics" there. The crusade turned out a fiasco, as did some of the other crusades of that decadent crusading age. The great inspiration of the original Crusades (1095–1270) was away and gone, but the ecclesiastical powers were still using the name and the idea for their own ends, and hoped for a recrudescence of the old enthusiasm, but in vain. When after years of hesitation the bones of Wycliffe were burned and scattered on the Swift, the ecclesiastical powers felt that their hour had come, and the Archbishop of Canterbury at a meeting of the Provincial Convocation ordered strong measures to be taken against the

Lollards, who were daily growing in numbers and influence. A fresh attack was therefore made upon the reforming sect, and many were imprisoned and burned. In 1431, however, the English King had severe reverses in France,—the year in which Joan of Arc was put to death: the throne was weakly held, and the struggle between York and Lancaster became acute. The Lollard persecution practically ceased, though the influence was still living, active, and vigorous. It was a wonderful age for dissension and unrest: Popes and general councils were at variance, and both politically and religiously Europe was in the throes of revolution. Still every now and then in the story of these troubled years there appears some earnest, obscure Lollard who continues the testimony that Scripture is the final court of appeal, and that the preaching of the gospel is the principal duty of the Church.

Not until the year 1457 does Lollardism reappear associated with any but humble, obscure, and unknown men. In that year, however, a sensation was caused in England by the open advocacy of reforming views by the Bishop of Chichester, Reynold Pecock, who suffered imprisonment for the position he took up. He was not a thoroughgoing Lollard, and in some respects, indeed, opposed their teachings. But he would have no persecution of them, and openly approved of the reading of the Bible, though not in English, besides opposing heartily the papal usurpations of the time. His citation declared that he "held conclusions contrary to the true faith," and that he had at St. Paul's Cross openly preached that "the office of a Christian prelate, above all things, is to preach the Word of God: that

man's reason is not to be preferred before the Scriptures, and that Scripture is only to be taken in its proper sense." Archbishop Burscher, who was now Primate of Canterbury, examined him, and induced him to recant. The fear of a fiery death seems to have shaken him, for he confessed that he had promulgated false doctrines, though it would seem that he never thoroughly relinquished his opinions. He was deprived of his bishopric, imprisoned at Thorney Abbey for the rest of his life, and, it is declared by some, at last was done to death. His prayer for the Church of Christ has been preserved: "O thou Lord Jesu, God and man, Head of Thy Christian Church and teacher of Christian belief, I beseech Thy mercy, Thy pity, Thy charity. Far be this peril [belief in the infallibility of the Pope] from the Christian Church and from each person therein contained. And shield Thou so that this venom be never brought into Thy Church; and if Thou suffer it to be brought in for any while, I beseech Thee that it be soon again cast out. But suffer Thou, ordain and do, that the law and faith which Thy Church at any time keepeth, be brought under examination whether it be the very same faith which Thou and Thine apostles taught or no, and whether it hath sufficient evidences to prove whether it is the real faith or not." Thus from beneath the shadow of the cathedral of Chichester, with its tall and graceful spire, — the finest almost in England, and surrounded by the lofty elm trees which are still a feature of the interesting old Sussex cathedral city, came an unlooked-for but stiking testimony to scriptural and apostolical doctrine. The two names most intimately associated with the city are of Collins

the ill-starred poet, who was born and died in Chichester, and of Reginald Pecock, who centuries before dared to think and speak for himself.

In 1466 Neville, archbishop of York, decreed several canons, in which he required every parish priest to preach four times every year, either personally or by substitute, to the parishioners, and to explain to them "without any fantastical subtilties," the fourteen articles of faith of the Roman Church, the Ten Commandments, the two precepts of the gospel, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven cardinal virtues, and the seven sacraments. It would have required the brevity of a Dean Swift on a proverbial occasion to have condensed so much matter into four village sermons. The archbishop provided, however, brief commentaries on these subjects; and it is remarkable that in the homily on the Ten Commandments the second is omitted, while the tenth is divided into two. The fifth is interpreted as referring mainly to obedience to the bishop of the diocese and Holy Mother Church. The first half of the tenth commandment forbids coveting our neighbour's immoveable property, while the second half refers to moveables. The same rearrangement of the precepts of Sinai is adopted in present-day Roman catechisms and manuals.

Edward IV. was now on the English throne (1461–83), and found it a most uncomfortable seat. The civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster brought their horrors and distresses, but these very civil upheavals seem to have diverted the Church's mind from the Lollard hunt. To ingratiate himself with the clergy, Edward passed a statute which made them almost independent of the civil government, by abolish-

ing the "statute of *premunire*," which had checked Rome's temporal authority in England, and which, though Popes had striven to have it abrogated, was still sanctioned by the House of Commons. This charter of King Edward's made it impossible for ecclesiastics to be prosecuted by the civil power, and the direct result was that many laymen on being charged with criminal offences took ecclesiastical orders after the charge had been made, and thus escaped civil punishment.

The strife around the throne, however, served the Lollards a good purpose, giving them to some extent a shelter in the storm and a lull in their persecutions. In 1473, however, John Goose suffered on Tower Hill. The sheriff, Robert Belisdon, strove beforehand to turn him from his beliefs, but to no purpose; and as a closing scene in the tragedy, Goose asked if as a last favour he might before his execution be supplied with a good meal, as he was hungry. The same almost humorous request was made by James Guthrie, the Covenanter, the night before his execution in Edinburgh, when he "called for cheese,"—an article of diet which under ordinary circumstances, owing to his delicate digestion, he could never venture upon, but of which he partook heartily on this occasion, knowing that he could not suffer from his chronic dyspepsia on the morn. So Goose had his last supper, saying, "I eat now a good and sufficient dinner, as I have a sharp but short shower to pass through after supper." After he had dined he gave thanks, and passed out to his death.

The Tudor Henry VII. ascended the throne in 1485 and reigned until 1509. Several Lollard martyrdoms appear on the roll-call of his reign, notably the first

female martyr ever put to death by burning in England,—an aged woman of over eighty years named Joan Boughton, mother of Lady Young, who also suffered for her Lollardism. She was urged by severe examination and threats of burning to recant, but declined, and was accordingly burned. Others, notably an aged Lollard, met the same fate about this time. But the most barbarous case was that of William Tylsworth, who, charged with heresy, was burned at Amersham in Buckinghamshire in 1506. His only daughter, Joan Clerk, was compelled to light her father's funeral pyre, and her husband along with some sixty other sympathisers had to do penance, some being branded on the cheek, others flogged or imprisoned. Following up this *auto-da-fé*, the following day at Buckingham a plain miller, Roberts of Missenden, was burned, while twelve people had to carry faggots and do penance at the same time. Amongst others who suffered at this period was Father Rogers, who was imprisoned for fourteen weeks in the bishop's prison, and emerged from his confinement so much crippled with the irons and with cold and hunger that his back was actually bent. He and others were then branded.

Fox, Strype, Fuller, and other chroniclers of the period tell their story consistently and clearly, and the first of these had his information in many cases direct from eye-witnesses. Thomas Chase of Amersham was strangled in jail after severe tortures. It was given out that he had hanged himself in prison, and he was buried in Norland wood, between Woburn and Little Marlow; but a woman heard his voice calling upon God to receive his spirit as he was being done to death.

Laurence Ghest was another who suffered about this time at Salisbury for denying transubstantiation; and while at the stake his wife and children were brought to see him, but he remained unmoved, and endured to the end. This was the very age in which Columbus was opening up the vision of the New World: the Old World was engaged in closing up the vision of liberty and light of which Wycliffe and his followers had caught a glimpse. Vasco di Gama was piercing his way into new seas and fresh countries, but the spiritual and intellectual pioneers of Europe were checked in their presumptuous endeavours after a wider life and understanding.

Proud of its success in quelling rebellion, the Church even went further in its claims and contentions. The system of Indulgences became popular. To build St. Peter's the system was so boldly practised that at last the Reformation broke out. St. Peter's is the monument of Michelangelo's genius, and the great starting-point of liberalised thought. Tetzel was the cause of Luther. The pure spirituality of men like Albert Dürer, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo — the artistic lights of the Renaissance, was overshadowed by the greedy deceit of ecclesiastical schemers, who scrupled at no device to raise the wind when money was necessary. Religion was made a stalking-horse to policy, and, as Sir Walter Scott says, a trading copartnery was formed to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm. And yet in the very St. Peter's at Rome, for the building of which Indulgences were so ostentatiously used, contains a fine representation of a woman—probably one of Michelangelo's efforts — evidently

rising from the dead, with the graveclothes loosely dropping from her body, and with her hands she is endeavouring to remove the swathing-bands from her eyes that she may see the great vision of a new life. It seems to be a picture of the age struggling with death-bands to behold the new light. A similar idea is embodied in the monument to Dr. Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's, poet and thinker—one of the few monuments preserved from Old St. Paul's after the fire, along with the sculptured stone on which is inscribed the word "resurgam," which was interpreted as a prophecy of the rebuilding of the minster, but was also a prediction of a future age of enlightenment and inspiration. The figure of the poet-dean is represented risen out of the funeral urn, and the death-bands are slackened round the head, and the awakened eyes are turned towards the east and the "light that shone when hope was born."

The system of Indulgences, which was the direct occasion of Luther's rebellion against the Holy See, spread to England, and the Archbishop of Canterbury received power from the Pope to dispense them. About the middle of Henry VII.'s reign the bridge of Rochester was out of repair, and there were difficulties in the way of getting anyone to undertake the responsibility of putting it right, and the Bishop of Rochester was thus inconvenienced in his journeys from Canterbury to London. Accordingly an Indulgence was issued, granting release from purgatory for forty days to every one who would render assistance, and so the bridge was speedily completed.

The mechanicalism and ceremonialism of the Church in the early years of the sixteenth century stiffened

more and more. Not Indulgences only, but the withdrawal of the cup from the laity, the introduction of new festivals, pilgrimages, confessionals, images, and the like, became pronounced features of a mechanical age. The Archbishop of York, George Neville, enumerated thirty-seven sins which only a bishop or a Pope could pardon, and the greatest of these was heresy. The introduction of printing helped the reforming cause, and the Church for long banned the Press.

In 1509 Henry VIII. became King; and though during his reign England at last threw off allegiance to the Holy See, the early part of his reign was characterised by many acts of persecution against Lollards and other like-minded people. In the registry of Archbishop Warham there are many such records. On 2nd May 1511 eight men and four women, chiefly inhabitants of Tenterden, were summoned before the archbishop and accused of denying transubstantiation, confession, priestly power, and other current beliefs, such as pilgrimages, image-worship, prayers to saints, extreme unction, and the like. They were made to abjure their doctrines, and to carry a faggot on their shoulders in processions in Canterbury Cathedral and in their own parish churches, to show they acknowledged that they deserved death by burning. During that summer the archbishop sat at Lambeth Palace many times, trying others who were similarly charged and similarly punished.

William Carder of Tenterden, on the 29th of April 1511, was charged with Lollard heresy, and said he was willing to retract all he had said except that "it was enough to pray to Almighty God alone, and

that we do not need to pray to the saints." Agnes Grevill, Robert Harrison, John Brown, and Edward Walker were also condemned on the 2nd and 19th of May.

The John Brown referred to got into trouble first of all by questioning the power of a priest, who had journeyed with him on board a barge on the Thames, to deliver a soul from purgatory. He was informed against by the priest, and brought before Archbishop Warham. He was taken to Canterbury and kept in prison for forty days. The archbishop and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, had him tortured, his bare feet being set upon burning coals. On the Friday before Whitsunday 1517 he was sent to his native town of Ashford to be burned. His wife and children were present, and at the stake he exhorted them to be faithful, constant, and true; and so commending himself to God, he passed away.

Agnes Grevill or Grebil was cited before Archbishop Warham, and her own husband and children, who had abjured the Lollard views, were brought as witnesses against her. Her husband stated that his wife became a Lollard in the reign of Edward IV. through the influence of John Ive, and added that he had also instructed his sons in the same beliefs. These two sons, aged nineteen and twenty-two, gave evidence against their mother; and the mother, destitute of all friends, burst out with the exclamation that she deeply "regretted the time that ever she bare these children." The archbishop "having called upon the name of Christ, and having God alone before his eyes," delivered both father and mother over to the secular power to be dealt with as heretics.

Dean Colet, who founded St. Paul's School in London, narrowly escaped destruction about this time for his partial sympathy with Lollardism. The Bishop of London, Fitzjames, accused him of heresy to Archbishop Warham, one head of the charge being that he had translated the Paternoster into English. Warham, however, valued Colet for his personal character, gifts, and learning, and stayed the proceedings against him. Colet was a remarkable man; he was the eldest son of Sir Henry Colet, who had been twice Lord Mayor, and having been educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, he travelled to France and Italy and met Erasmus, Budæus, and other scholars, and from them obtained an enthusiasm not only for Greek, which was then little known in England, but for intellectual and spiritual independence. Returning to England, he read lectures in Oxford on St. Paul's Epistles. He possessed a large estate, and being without near relatives, he devoted his wealth to found St. Paul's School in London, making the Company of Mercers trustees, and the learned Lilly the first Master in 1512. At the age of fifty-three Dr. Colet died, and was buried in the choir of Old St. Paul's, of which he was first canon and then dean, besides being chaplain and preacher-in-ordinary to Henry VIII. He wrote a book on grammar, besides works on prayer, "daily devotions," and letters to Erasmus, all of which show him to have been a learned, devout, and spiritually-minded ecclesiastic.

The registers of Fitzjames contain particulars of the accusations brought against several persons between 1509 and 1517 charged with heresy,—chiefly for denying transubstantiation. Joan Baker was accused of

denying the efficacy of a crucifix herself, and of urging a dying friend not to trust in that symbol, but only in God. Other five were accused of reading heretical books, chiefly English versions of the Evangelists. William Sweeting and John Brewster were other two notable Lollards who had formerly abjured, and on doing penance were pardoned. They returned, however, to the Wycliffe views, and were condemned and burned. One accusation against them was that they had left off wearing the faggot-badge which was enjoined on all who had been accused of heresy, —a kind of Cain-mark or broad arrow which would ensure subsequent identification. Sweeting had left off his, because, searching for a livelihood which he could not obtain at home, he had wandered to Colchester and been engaged as holy-water clerk by the priest of St. Mary Magdalene, who insisted on him leaving off the badge of heresy; while Brewster had left off his, because the Earl of Oxford, who employed him as a servant, would not suffer him to wear it. Badge or no badge, at any rate, these Lollards were hopelessly driven to their fate; and though it is said they recanted and were pardoned, all the weight of evidence goes to prove that they met their doom at the stake.

The beginning of the sixteenth century was a time of transition. Disputes between the Franciscans and Dominicans as to the Virgin Mary were rife, more especially as to her immaculate conception, and, finally, the Holy See has decreed the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, a decree glorified in the Church of St. Maria Maggiore in Rome. A more practical question, however, arose regarding the

immunity of ecclesiastical persons from punishment when convicted of crime. In 1512 an Act of Parliament was passed, which, while it exempted bishops, priests, and deacons from the power of the civil courts, even in cases of murder and robbery, subjected inferior clergy to the civil law. All the pulpits of England were up in arms against the decree. The Abbot of Winchelcomb declared that all persons who assented to the decree were heretics. Parliament protested and appealed to the King. The abbot was opposed before the King by Dr. Standish, a friar, and one of the King's spiritual counsel, who urged that ecclesiastics should be subject to civil punishment for crimes. The abbot was supported by the bishops, who declared that he advanced their own opinion and that of the Church.

Another circumstance arose about this time which caused friction between the clergy and the laity. A merchant tailor in London, Richard Hunne, had a child at nurse at Whitechapel which died at the age of five weeks. The priest claimed a mortuary or fee from the father, which the father refused. Thereupon the priest sued the father before the legate's court, and the father sued the priest, resting on the old statute which rendered him liable to punishment for citing anyone before a foreign court. To prevent Hunne from prosecuting the priest, he was charged of heresy by the Bishop of London, and accused on 2nd December 1514, at the instance of Dr. Horsey, the bishop's chancellor, with heresy, namely—(1) that he objected to paying tithes; (2) that he said bishops and priests are like the Pharisees who condemned Christ to death; and (3) that bishops and clergy were

teachers but not doers of Christ's law: also that he had in his possession Wycliffe's Epistles, Gospels, and works. He was condemned for heresy and committed to the Lollards' Tower. On 4th December a boy carrying him provisions found him dead, hanging by a silk girdle. It was given out by the Church that he had hanged himself; but investigation followed, and it was proved that Hunne's neck had been broken by an iron chain, and that he had been otherwise ill-treated in such wise as he could not have done himself.

The bishop and clergy determined to carry the matter through with a high hand. Though dead, Hunne was condemned for heresy—"Hunne defendeth the translation of the Bible and the Holy Scripture into the English tongue, which is prohibited by the laws of our Mother Holy Church." These articles were read at St. Paul's Cross on the Sunday after, and on 16th December the bishops and clergy summoned all who wished to defend Hunne or his opinions to appear. No one came, and sentence was pronounced against his dead body,—evidently reflecting the procedure with Wycliffe,—and he was committed to the secular power to be burned for heresy on the 20th December 1514. He was burned in presence of the people, who had "great grief and disdain," and the result was a warm feeling of indignation against the Church.

A strict inquest was held into the whole matter before the King and Privy Councillors, and it was judged that Dr. Horsey the chancellor, and Charles the sumner, and Spalding the bell-ringer, were guilty of murder. It is said that before Hunne's death the

chancellor came to the Lollards' Tower and begged God's pardon for his action. On 5th February 1515, Parliament met and ordered that Hunne's property, which, as he was a heretic, had been confiscated, should be given to his children, and this was done to the amount of £1500. On 3rd April the House of Commons demanded that his murderers should be brought to justice; but the Bill was thrown out through strong clerical iufluence, the Bishop of London violently declaring that Hunne had made away with himself, that the coroner and jury had been poisoned, and that if the Bill were passed, he himself would not be safe. The prosecution was continued and driven home against Dr. Standish, who claimed the King's protection. Henry VIII. in his perplexity summoned Dr. Veysey, the Dean of the Chapel Royal, and he declared that he thought Standish was right. Much debate was held in Council, Parliament, and Convocation, and at last it was arranged that the archbishop should surrender Horsey, who was in hiding at Lambeth, who on being submitted to trial was to declare himself not guilty, and be dismissed without a trial. This was done, and thus Horsey escaped, the King's authority was asserted, while the mass of the people were dissatisfied. Horsey, afraid of the popular tumult, retired to Exeter, London being too dangerous a residence for him. Many of the documents referring to this momentous trial—momentous in the sense that it settled the question whether the clergy were subject to civil jurisdiction in criminal cases—were destroyed in the Great Fire, but as many of them escaped that ordeal as to prove that this murder was not what has been designated "The Legend of Hunne."

The hour of the German Reformation had now come, and Luther's writings were circulated all over Europe, many of them being translated into English. Between the doctrines of Luther and those of Wycliffe there is a narrow boundary. To all intents and purposes both are the rebellion of the spirit and soul against mechanicalism and superstition. The succession of the Lollards in England still remained, as is proved by the registers of Fitzjames, which are full of confessions, convictions, abjurations, and restitutions.

Elizabeth Stamford had been taught by Beel, residing at Henley, the doctrine of the spiritual reception of Christ in the sacrament — the same as laid down by John Craig, Knox's colleague in his *Catechism*, "This is not received by chewing of teeth, but by hearing of ears, and understanding with your soul, and wisely working thereafter." Beel taught her that "confession to a priest was of no avail, and that papal pardons and Indulgences were worth nothing."

Between 1517 and 1520 many persons were cited before the bishops for heresy. John Stillman was examined by the Bishop of Salisbury, and it was discovered that he had not given up some Wycliffe writings which at his former examination had been found in his possession, but had concealed them in an old oak tree, and brought them subsequently to London. He was burned for it in 1518. In the same year Thomas Mann met his death at the stake. Previously, before the Bishop of Lincoln, he had been charged with not believing in the "Sacrament of Extreme Unction," and was ordered to wear the faggot-badge and remain in St. Frideswide's Monastery in Oxford. He managed to escape, and was found in London

badgeless, and proceeded against as a heretic. With their three fingers on the holy Gospels, the witnesses against him had to swear the truth, the thumb and little finger put downwards under the book as if to show that condemnation was theirs if they told falsehoods. The bishop's chancellor, Dr. Hed, was his counsel, but inveigled him into confirming a witness on the other side. The jail-keeper declared that Mann had said that "the laws of the Church were grounded upon Pilate and Caiaphas." On 29th March he was delivered by Dr. Hed to the Sheriff of London with the admonition—"We desire in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ that thy punishment on this account may be so moderate, that there be no rigour nor want of mildness, but that all may be done for the salvation and welfare of thy soul." In Paternoster Row the sheriff had Mann delivered to him at the back-door of the bishop's house, the chancellor declaring that he could not put him to death. But the sheriff knew what was meant, and had him brought to Smithfield and burned. Mann seems to have acted as an itinerant Lollard preacher sometimes in Norfolk, Suffolk, Middlesex, Berks, and Buckinghamshire. A secret congregation of Lollards at Newbury, which had met for fifteen years, was betrayed, and some of them were burned, and all of them punished in one way or another. Having escaped his fate at Newbury, he joined the Amersham congregation, and after its dispersal he was arrested in 1518 and burned, the episcopal register declaring that he confessed to having "turned seven hundred people to his religion, for which he thanks God."

In the registers of Longland, bishop of Lincoln, the

burning is recorded of John Cosin, who taught a woman that she might as well drink before Mass on Sundays as on any other day. Christopher Shoomaker was burned at Newbury for reading out of the Gospels and denying transubstantiation. Coventry was famous for its burnings. In 1519, seven were destroyed in one fire—four shoemakers, Hatches, Archer, Bond and Hawkins, a glover called Wrigsham, a hosier named Landale, and a widow called Smith. For having taught their children the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer in English, they were all burned in the Little Park; and their children, who were examined as to their parents' teaching by the warden of Maxtock Abbey, and informed that they might save their parents from death, were left destitute. There was a great wave of discontent over this event, and finally to assuage it the bishop declared that it was not for having these articles in English, but for eating meat on Fridays and other fast days that they were punished. One of their companions, Robert Selker, made good his escape, but two years later was burned at Coventry (1521).

During 1520–21 the registers of Lincoln diocese reveal a busy term of prosecution. Lollardism had spread its influence far and wide. Though public meetings of the sect were prohibited, the Scriptures and Wycliffe's tracts passed from hand to hand, even as much as a load of hay being given for a few chapters of St. Paul's Epistles. The charges made against them were not for any immoral or irreligious conduct, but uniformly for denying the characteristic doctrines of the Roman Church. Longland, then Bishop of Lincoln, was a stern opponent of the new

views, and cross-questioned suspected persons widely and vigorously, entangling them, and getting them to expose and accuse one another of heresy. For the year 1521 his register contains a hundred names of persons tried for heresy. Richard White of Beaconsfield was one of those who, referring to Longland's predecessor, was overheard to remark that he was a good man, and that if his successor were "a blessed man" he would leave the Lollards alone. But White found to his cost that new bishops make new laws. Some of the names of these Lincoln Lollards may be given:—James Morden, who was informed against by his sister for teaching her the Lord's Prayer, etc., in English; John Barnet, for having recited St. James' Epistle in his family without book; Agnes Ward, for declaring that in her danger it was better to go to God than to Our Lady and the saints; Robert Drury, vicar of Windrish, for advising his servant to eat bread and cheese on a fast day; Isabel Morwen, for questioning the doctrine of purgatory at her father's deathbed; John Teacher, for having taught a friend the beatitudes and other verses in English; Richard Vulford, and Thomas Geffrey, for denying transubstantiation, and declaring that he knew of two priests who put a mouse into the pyx as an experiment, and the mouse ate the wafer,—an experiment which cost one of these Essex priests his life; John and Richard Bernard, Richard Vulford, Thomas Philip, Laurence Taylor, and others for reading the Scriptures in English; a youth named John Collins of Burford actually informed against his own father because he had taught him the Scriptures in English, and not to worship the sacrament of the altar as God; Henry Philp was accused

by his own father for denying the validity of pilgrimages and images; while John Scrivener's own children were compelled to light his pyre.

Wycliffe's two books, *The Wicket* and *The Shepherd's Calendar*, were at this time widely circulated in England; and in these the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was distinctly explained as against transubstantiation. "Men speak much of the sacrament of the altar, but this will I abide by, that Christ brake bread to His disciples and bade them eat it, saying that it was His flesh and blood; and then He went from them and suffered, and then rose from death to life and ascended into heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of the Father: and there He is to remain unto the day of doom, when He shall judge both quick and dead, and, therefore, how He should be here in the form of bread, I cannot see." Bishop Longland could not controvert the plain Scripture teaching of the Lollards, and so called in the civil power to assist him in discovering and punishing the Wycliffite dissentients.

Many Lollards submitted, and, having abjured their opinions, had penance given them, and were sent to some monastery or abbey as prisoners. There is still extant a letter from the bishop to the Abbot of Ensham, carried by a Lollard penitent to the monastery, which is as follows:

"My loving brother, I recommend me heartily unto you. And whereas I have according to the law put the bearer R. T. to perpetual penance within your monastery of Ensham, there to live as a penitent and not otherwise, I pray you and command you to receive him. As for his lodging, he will bring it with

him; and as for his meat and drink, he may have such as you give of your alms. And if he can so order himself by his labour within your house, in your business, whereby he may deserve his meat and drink, you may order him as ye see convenient to his deserts, so that he pass not the precincts of your monastery."

Those who were not destined to participate in the "riotous living" outlined in the bishop's epistle, were in a more lenient spirit condemned to carry a wood-faggot in market or church, to fast at certain seasons, and to repeat the Lady psalter on Sundays and Fridays throughout the year. They were also forbidden to hide their brands in any way, to suffer their beards to grow more than fourteen days, or to be found with any suspected persons in private houses. These vows they were obliged to take with their hand on the holy Gospels, and with the sign of the cross declaring that they detested and forsook their heresies for themselves and for others for ever.

These oppressive measures, however, at last raised the strong cry of discontent and disapproval; and what with the admitted unsatisfactory state of the clergy, the oppression of the people by the Church, and even the yoke under which he himself was obliged to rule, Henry VIII. at last began to waver. He had been a devoted son of the Church, and had written his famous treatise against Luther on the "seven Sacraments," a copy of which was presented to the Pope in 1521 and was received with the most unctuous eulogies, His Holiness declaring that the book would be placed alongside of Augustine and Jerome and the rest. To crown all, since Henry could not receive

the fateful Golden Rose, the Pope made him "Defender of the Faith," a title still enjoyed by the Sovereigns of Great Britain, though in their Coronation Oath abjuring the faith referred to.

Not content with placing Henry's treatise on a level with the holy Fathers, the Pope granted an indulgence for ten years to all who read it; and this included permission to eat flesh in Lent. Luther vigorously replied to Henry, and at the same time allowed Cardinal Wolsey to feel some of the hearty knocks which the little monk who shook Europe could give. To get at Luther was impossible; but King and cardinal united to suppress his books, and required all those in possession of any of the writings of "that pestilent heretic Martin Luther" to deliver them to their ordinaries within fifteen days on pain of being treated as heretics. Cardinal Wolsey was papal legate, and as such ordered a notice to be affixed to the door of every church summing up the forty-two propositions extracted from Luther's works which had been condemned by the Holy See. Notwithstanding all Wolsey's stern measures of repression the Lollard cause advanced, and Luther's works were translated and read all over England. Wolsey overstepped the limits of his commission as papal legate, and summoned in his own name a council "to reform the manners of the clergy." Fox, bishop of Winchester, had suggested this to him in a long letter in which he says that "by this means of a reformation of the clergy he thought the common people would be pacified, that were always crying out against them." Wolsey's whole device was as futile in its results as it was questionable in its real motive, the real state

of affairs being that he wished to put his foot on the neck of the English clergy and bishops and aggrandise himself, while his own private life had more need of reformation than anything else.

Worse than any vices in the eyes of Wolsey and the bishops was the reading of the English Scriptures and the writings of Wycliffe and Luther, and the denial of transubstantiation, image-worship, purgatory, etc. Nevertheless the "Brethren in Christ," these early Reformers who gathered in groups in London, Colchester, and in various parts of Essex, survived. Many were arrested and brought face to face with Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, and his chancellor, Dr. Wharton. Tunstall was a pious and learned man, and actually in 1541 along with Nicholas Heath, bishop of Rochester, revised a new edition of the English Bible. The Psalms still preserved in the Anglican Prayer-Book are Tunstall's, and are fine examples of forceful, nervous, vigorous English. His lenity towards Protestants frequently got him into trouble, and he even spent some time in the Tower.

In 1527 Tunstall held a visitation of his diocese, and the original registers record several cases of arrest and examination for heresy. For example, John Pykas of Colchester, a baker, swore regarding Richard Best that he had heard him repeat St. James' Epistle in English by heart; regarding John Girling, that conversing with him regarding prayer, he declared that only the Father of Lights was the proper object of devotion and adoration; regarding Thomas Raylond, that conversing with him he had quoted in English the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Epistles of James and John, and regarded baptism as

only a sign of remission. Pykas also witnessed against Marian Matthew for repeating off by heart in English, parts of the Epistles and Gospels, and speaking against pilgrimages, as well as witnessing against four other females and Thomas Parker. In turn, Raylond, just referred to, was examined as to Pykas and others, with the effect that this inquisitorial procedure resulted in hundreds of secret Lollards being discovered and brought before the bishop and chancellor, one notable person thus unearthed being Robert Forman, rector of a London city parish, and other clergy. Tunstall's method was to endeavour to persuade the prisoners to relinquish their views, or at any rate to dissemble them in order that there might be no further difficulties for him or for them.

Another name comes into evidence about this time, that of John Tyball, the chief charge against whom was that he possessed several copies and portions of the New Testament in English. He openly confessed that the study of a chapter in St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians led him to his beliefs, and also brought Richard Fox, curate of Bumstead in Essex, to the same views. One who confessed to Fox in Lent, of the name of Robert Hempstead, was asked by him as to his beliefs regarding the sacrament of the altar, and replied that he believed it to be the very body and blood of Christ. Fox replied to him: "Nay, thou must not do so; for this is not the best way: but believe thou in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and not in the sacrament of the altar." Hempstead replied, suspecting duplicity: "I fear you go about to bring me into the same situation as the

men of Colchester"; and Fox replied: "Why, man, art thou afraid? Be not afraid, for they serve a better Master than ever thou didst serve."

In all these cases of prosecution for heresy, as recorded by Strype, Fox, and others, they quote from the episcopal registers of the time, and not from mere hearsay or rumour. Of course, the chief authority for these cases of heresy in the sixteenth century and earlier is Fox's *Acts and Monuments of the Church*, a work in which he was assisted by Bishop Grindal, then an exile, and many others at home and abroad. Fox began his *Book of Martyrs* in 1552, and took eleven years to finish the compilation, the first edition appearing in 1563; and the simple, homely record, complied entirely from the episcopal registers and the evidence and recollections of witnesses, had a most potent influence in helping on the cause of Reform in England. In time the wave, long gathering, finally broke, and Henry VIII. at last renounced the papal authority and assumed the title of Head of the Church of England. During the latter half of his reign he showed as much zeal in persecuting the defenders of the Roman faith as he had previously done in crushing the reforming party. At last he was excommunicated by Pope Clement; and it would almost seem that these temporal and spiritual sovereigns were about equally defective in the moral line, for the papal historian Guicciardini, while calling Clement a good Pope, adds: "I mean not goodness apostolical, for in those days he was esteemed a good Pope that did not exceed the worst of men in wickedness." Tyndale printed the first edition of his New Testament at Cologne or Wittemberg in 1525, and

copies of the new version rapidly overspread England, so much so that Tunstall, bishop of London, proscribed them, and made a bonfire of many of them in Cheapside. His action was, however, of little use, for the invention of printing was now an accomplished fact, and the Dutch printers produced multitudes of fresh copies. Strange to say, Sir Thomas More was one of those who frowned upon Tyndale's Testament, and strictly examined those who had to do with any heretics connected with Antwerp. Ridley and Latimer followed, and in course of time Henry and England finally broke with Rome; and though the Pope asked the nation and nobles to rebel against him, and forbade them to obey him who once was the "Defender of the Faith," it was of no use: the hour had come: the hand pointed to the hour of final reformation, and the clock at last struck.

CHAPTER II

Lollardism in Scotland

Christianity in Scotland began with St. Ninian, St. Columba, and St. Mungo. These were the real fathers of the Faith of Christ in Caledonia. The Columban Church, which was the real Church of Scotland, differed in many respects from the Roman Church as expounded by St. Augustine the great Roman missionary, and first prelate of Canterbury. The differences were not very great after all. In early times the Scottish Church was concerned with hair-cutting; in later times, with hair-splitting. The Culdees kept Easter upon the fourteenth day of the moon, without reference to the day of the week, instead of the Sunday following. The Paschal controversy, as well as the matter of the tonsure, just referred to,—the method in which the Christian missionaries should cut their hair, were the main issues at stake in an age which had to do with trifles. Behind these minor controversies and disputes there was, however, the deeper question of whether the Church of Scotland was to be held subject to Rome and its decisions and dogmas. Wyntoun declares that the Church of Scotland always loved "a way of its own," and this is abundantly true. When Abbot Bernard of Arbroath held his assembly of the Scottish barons and nobles in Arbroath Abbey

in 1318, he announced in the remarkable declaration which has come down, that rather than be subject to England he would go against the Holy See, a remarkable declaration of patriotism as against ecclesiasticism. Robert the Bruce was made King in 1306, and Abbot Bernard held the Great Seal until his death in 1327,—at all times and in all things a true Scottish patriot. Pope John XXII., in his Bull for anointing Robert Bruce king of Scotland, complained of the large number of heretics in Scotland. Alcuin and others were against the doctrine of transubstantiation in an earlier age in the North of England, and his followers in Yorkshire, together with the Culdees, kept up the independence of the Northern Church against Roman oppression. In the eleventh century, however, Queen Margaret, who was made a saint, practically suppressed the Culdee faith. The remonstrance, therefore, of Abbot Bernard of Arbroath and of the Churchmen who fought at Bannockburn was mainly political and patriotic, and was the voice of Northern Britain declaring for freedom, political and ecclesiastical. Scotland wished to be free and independent of England; and some of the noblest defenders of Scottish liberties were prominent Churchmen, who thus became antagonistic to Rome, which rather favoured England.

Of all these the greatest and most outstanding Scottish patriot was the great Abbot of Arbroath, Robert the Bruce's first chancellor after his elevation to the throne in 1306, and the keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland until 1327—the year of his death. The memorable assembly of nobles and prelates held in Arbroath Abbey, with its great round windows, far-stretching nave, and charming minstrels' gallery,

was instigated by this great and public-spirited Scotsman, who is believed to have drawn up that spirited declaration in favour of Scottish independence addressed to the Pope, which practically declared that rather than part with their independence, the Scottish people would break with the Church. The date of that remarkable manifesto is 6th April 1320, and was the expression of the feelings of the entire Scottish people against the aggressions of England. England tried to bring papal influence to bear upon the Holy See to favour its scheme of aggression, which had suffered so great a shock at Bannockburn in 1314, when the mailed Churchman took his place on the field of battle alongside of the baron and the knight, and fought for freedom's noble cause.

This was, however, more a political than a religious rebellion against Rome; for ever since Queen Margaret, Malcolm Canmore's pious consort, managed to oust the Culdees and substitute for them the more active and missionary clergy of the Roman Church, Scotland had become daily more thoroughly a dependency of the Holy See. The saintly Queen who thus, coming to Scotland, succeeded in ousting the original Church and ways of the land of her adoption, was beatified by Rome for her service to the Vicar of Christ. Culdeeism died hard, however, and for more than a century continued to live, though only in scattered places and in decreasing numbers, and finally disappeared altogether, and the Roman Church entirely supplanted the ancient Church of St. Columba. The views and practices of Rome, however, were often questioned in Scotland even after that conspicuous triumph, by those who remembered the earlier teach-

ing and the more primitive faith. In various Roman Catholic histories of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, reference is made to isolated individuals who held the doctrines of the Waldenses and of the English Lollards.

Wycliffe was Master of Balliol College,—the venerable school of learning, the third oldest foundation in Oxford, founded by John Balliol, the father of John de Balliol, king of Scotland, in 1361. The founder was to have been flagellated at the church doors of Durham Cathedral, but escaped by founding in 1260 this college for poor scholars. In the *Rotuli Scotiæ* there are to be found many Scotch names in this College founded by the Scottish King, and still the most Scottish bit of Oxford University. From 1357–1389 there seems to have been quite a stream of young Scotsmen going to Oxford under the safe-conducts of the King of England. These passports, so to speak, enabled young Scottish students to go to Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and elsewhere; but from 1364–1379 every one of them almost seems to have gravitated towards Oxford, where Wycliffe was in the height of his power and influence, Oxford at the height of its intellectual and spiritual glory, and Lollardism in the full strength of a new enthusiasm. In 1365 safe-conducts were given to eight of our Scottish students to go to Oxford, proving that the powerful hand of Wycliffe had reached as far as Caledonia. These returned students brought with them to Scotland, as the Bohemian students did to their home-land, the powerful influences and the glowing enthusiasm of the Master of Balliol.

In 1405 the presence of Lollard influences in Scotland

was the occasion of public attention. Robert, duke of Albany, had been made Governor of Scotland, and Wyntoun says of him in his *Chronicle*:

> "He was a constant Catholike,
> All Lollard he hatyt and heretike."

It was somewhere about 1405 or thereabouts that the first movement was made in Scotland to extinguish the Lollard influence.

Moved by the Church, the civil power threatened the holders of the new views, and an inquisitorial court was formed, presided over by Lawrence of Lindores, who afterwards became Abbot of Scone, first Professor of Law in St. Andrews, and the author of *Examen Hæreticorum Lollardorum quos toto regno exegit.* Notwithstanding these repressive measures, the voice of the Lollard was heard in the land. In St. Andrews the movement must have been unusually strong from 1405 onwards, for in 1416 it was enacted that all Masters of Arts should as part of their graduation oath solemnly abjure Lollardism.

A striking figure in Scotland about this time was Patrick Graham, Archbishop of St. Andrews, who, after serving as prelate of Brechin, went to Rome to have his election as Bishop of St. Andrews confirmed. The controversy between England and Scotland as to whether the Scottish Church was independent or subject to the Archbishop of York reached an acute stage in 1471, when Graham so convinced the Pope of the reasonableness of the claims of the Church of Scotland, which, as Wyntoun says, "always loved a way of its own," that he gained independence for it, broke the rule of York, and had his own See erected into an

archbishopric to which the twelve Scottish bishops were to be subject. He was appointed also papal legate to Scotland for three years. Archbishop Graham's strong action in Rome was not acceptable to the Scottish sovereign, to the nobility generally, who feared that the scandalous sale of Church livings would be stopped, and to many of the clergy, whose envy he excited. After his return to Scotland he was charged with having exceeded his powers in carrying on negotiations with the Pope without the King's consent; and Sheviz, the archdeacon of St. Andrews, who was the King's favourite for his skill in astrology, moved by clerical jealousy, brought other accusations against him as to his doctrines, though it does not seem clear that his leanings were towards Lollardism, but only in favour of ecclesiastical reforms. He was suspended as archbishop and papal legate meanwhile. Next, the rector of the university picked a quarrel with him, and brought the unfortunate prelate to court, and had him excommunicated. Graham, whether his beliefs savoured of Lollardism or not, and both sides have been plausibly argued, conducted himself like the noblest of the Wycliffe confessors. Always a man of primitive simplicity, apostolic zeal, and holy life, his trials purified him, and made him even greater. His meekness and fortitude in the face of the jealous abuse of Sheviz, who had wished the See of St. Andrews himself, excited the admiration even of his enemies. At last, however, his nerve and staying power gave way, and he became utterly distracted; and, taking advantage of his overstrung nerves, Sheviz managed to have him declared insane, and got the custody of his person. At first he was confined in the ancient

Culdee house in Inchcolm island on the Forth, and afterwards in Lochleven Castle, where a century later the beautiful Mary languished. Overwhelmed with his sorrows and the irksomeness of the close island prison, he died there in 1478. Whether he sympathised with Lollardism or not is an open question, but he certainly was the enemy of all abuses in the Church, and strove to have them removed. Like Abbot Bernard of Arbroath in Bruce's age, so Archbishop Graham in the fifteenth century was a great Scottish patriot, and one of the founders of the independence of the country and its Church. An earnest seeker after God, and withal a well persecuted one, he was, Lollard or no Lollard, a strong reforming influence in the Scotland of his day.

Knox in his History traces several of these protests and protesters against the domination and dogmas of Rome in Scotland. In the records of Glasgow, for instance, which, like other registers, he examined carefully, he found mention of John Risby, an English Lollard, who, being accused by Lawrence Linders for declaring that the Pope was not indeed the Vicar of Christ, was burned in 1422. A good deal of intercourse must have taken place between the Continent and Scotland, and the Bohemian influence seems to have told upon the latter. Lollardism began to appear in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament. James I. held a Parliament at Perth (March 1424), at which it was ordained that all bishops should, through their inquisitorial courts, search out all Lollard heretics and invoke the aid of civil courts to extirpate them,—Acts which were frequently repeated in subsequent years. In 1431 a Bohemian of the name of Paul Craw was

arrested at St. Andrews for holding the views of Wycliffe and Huss and denying the transubstantiation view of the sacrament, prayers to the saints, confession to priests, and other beliefs. He declared that he would resist to the last against these views, and accordingly he was handed over to the civil power and burned; and Knox declares that a brass ball was put in his mouth to prevent him speaking at the stake. Craw was a Bohemian doctor, and, like other brethren of the Common Life, used his profession to advance the cause of Lollardism. The Hussite leaders in Prague sent missionaries in this way all over Europe, these leaders in Craw's time being Procopius and John of Rokycana. The one testimony borne against all the Lollards everywhere was borne against Craw in the records of the inquisitorial court—familiar acquaintance with the vernacular Scripture; and this charge being amply substantiated against Craw, he met his doom, and thus brought credit to the Scottish inquisitor for unearthing so dangerous and subtle a heretic. But the most striking and remarkable testimony given for the Lollard doctrines in the fifteenth century was in the year 1494, when the "Lollards of Kyle" in Ayrshire, to the number of thirty, were accused by the Archbishop of Glasgow, Blackader, before the King and his council, for the Wycliffe heresies. The list includes the names of Campbell of Cesnock, Schaw of Pollamac, Reid of Barskynning, Helen Chamber, Lady Polkellie, Isabel Chamber, and the Lady Stair. In the register of Glasgow the charges against them are carefully enumerated,—that they refused to worship images and relics, denied the Vicarship of Christ to the Pope, while admitting the special powers given to St. Peter

and the apostles, and declared that at the altar the bread and wine were not turned into the corporeal body and blood of Christ. These Kyle Lollards seem to have expressed themselves pretty freely, if not sarcastically; for in declaring that the Pope is not St. Peter's successor they added that he is only such in so far as Christ said to that apostle—"Get thee behind me, Satan," and that all manner of deceit is practised by the Holy See in Indulgences, Bulls, and the like, exalting himself against Christ. They further declared that no Pope can remit the pains of purgatory or sanction miracles; and that prayer should be offered not to the Virgin or saints, but to God alone, "since He alone hears us and answers us." Knox in his account of these Kyle Lollards says that it is wonderful how God in His providence had preserved the record of their testimony in the registers of the bishops themselves; and this testimony is the more astonishing when it is remembered that copies of the Bible in Scotland were extraordinarily scarce. The Archbishop of Glasgow, who led the accusation before the King, was a man of remarkable power and gifts. Sprung from the old Berwickshire family of Blackader who distinguished themselves so much in the Border feuds in the middle of the fifteenth century, he was sent to Rome in 1480 by James III., and on that monarch's recommendation was created by the Pope, Sixtus IV., Bishop of Aberdeen. From Aberdeen he was translated to the See of Glasgow, and had so much influence with the Roman Pontiff that he managed to get his See created into an Archbishopric, and thus brought to a satisfactory conclusion a long-standing feud with St. Andrews. It was he who, in company with the

Earl of Bothwell and Andrew Forman, prior of Pittenweem, negotiated the marriage between James IV., whom he induced to become a canon of his cathedral, and Henry VII.'s daughter Margaret, thus laying the foundations of the union between England and Scotland. Along with Bothwell he was godfather to the royal prince born of that marriage, who did not survive long; and after a life full of strenuous action and laborious toils for the Church, he died in 1508 while on a journey to the Holy Land. The matchless crypt in Glasgow Cathedral and some other portions bearing his name, —the beautiful minster which raises its lofty spire above the place where Columba and Mungo met and together sang the praises of God, bear testimony to his zeal as a church-builder and adorner.

This first Archbishop of Glasgow was a zealous son of the Church, and brought the Kyle Lollards before the King whose marriage he had arranged, and the council over which he had strong influence, and pressed for a prosecution. King James IV. was, however, a man of amiable and generous character, brave and courageous, though fond of magnificence and pomp. His wise and salutary laws won for him the country's whole-hearted affection. By his marriage treaty, peace was concluded with England,—a peace which lasted nine years, to the immense benefit of Scotland, which never had enjoyed such tranquillity and prosperity as under his beneficent rule. Well would it have been had he kept his warlike, chivalrous, and impetuous disposition better in check in later years, for it was due to some comparatively small acts of hostility on the part of his brother-in-law Henry VIII., soon after his accession to the English throne, that that beneficent

peace was broken, Flodden fought, and Scotland robbed of the "flowers of the Forest," the King and his best nobility being among the slain.

The accusations against the Lollards in 1494 are thirty-four in number, as taken from the diocesan register, and these really show us what the orthodox Roman clergy of the day believed to be the Lollard opinions. Quintin Kennedy has a poem "In Prais of Aige," in which he refers to the spread of the Lollard faith in Scotland:

> "The schip of faith, tempestuous wind and rane
> Dryvis in the See of Lollerdry that blaws."

And in his poem "Flyting," Kennedy calls his opponent, William Dunbar, "Lampas Lollardorum," and a judas, a juggler, a pagan, and what-not.

At the Lollard trial, James rather favoured the accused, some of whom were close personal friends, and, like Lady Stair, of high station. Encouraged by this, the Lollards became bolder, and argued vigorously with their accusers, and finally were allowed to return home with the admonition to beware of new doctrines, and to rest content with the teaching of Holy Church in all things. Shortly after, while pilgrimaging to the Holy Land,—a sacred and meritorious act in days when such an enterprise took sometimes years to accomplish, and was accompanied with horrible risks of all kinds,—Archbishop Blackader died, and for thirty years after the Kyle Lollards enjoyed a respite. After Flodden, and during the minority of James v., we hear of no persecution of the Lollards; but as the reforming movement advanced abroad and in England, it seems almost certain that Scottish sympathisers with reform

would be subjected to surveillance, and be the objects of suspicion and hatred. It is interesting to note that the Lady Stair whose name appears in the list of those accused before the King,—the wife of William Dalrymple, had as her grandson John Dalrymple of Stair, who was among the very first of the Scottish gentry to make open profession of the Reformed doctrines, joining the Earls of Glencairn and Lennox when they appeared in arms, in 1544, at Glasgow Muir against the Earl of Arran, the Governor of Scotland, while his son again, James, took a leading part in the Scottish Reformation of 1560.[1]

Portions of Wycliffe's Bible and writings must have been carried north early in the fifteenth century, and the seed thus sown seems never to have been destroyed; but it is still more interesting to know that a MS. translation of Wycliffe's New Testament into the current Scots language of the day was in circulation in Scotland about the year 1520.[2] This written volume, which was the magazine for the reforming spirits of that age, was Purvey's Revision of Wycliffe's New Testament, and was translated into Scots by Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill in the Ayrshire parish of Loudon, associated in recent times with Robert Burns and Norman Macleod. Murdoch Nisbet some years before 1500 came to profess openly his adherence to the Lollard doctrines, and rejected the specialties of Roman superstition, and with some others had to flee for safety out of the country. While in exile he translated Wycliffe's New Testament into Scots, very much in the

[1] Knox's *Reformation*; Pinkerton's *History of Scotland*, ii. 418; John Murray Graham's *Annals and Correspondence of the Viscount and the first and second Earls of Stair*, i. 4.

[2] See note on page 325.

same way as Knox prepared his Confession and Creed sitting at the galley-oar, and Bunyan wrote his spiritual dream in Bedford jail.

Purvey's second transcription of Wycliffe's New Testament, published in 1388, four years after Wycliffe's death, was Nisbet's original; and Dr. Law, who edits the translation from the copy in possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney, dates it at 1520. At a later date Nisbet prefixed an address copied from Luther's preface to his German New Testament (1522), and later still added Tindale's prologue to the Epistle to the Romans (1525). This Scots translation of Wycliffe-Purvey's New Testament had many vicissitudes. Nisbet built finally, after his return to Scotland, a vault below his house at Hardhill, where he remained concealed till James v.'s death, instructing all who came to him, and at last the MS. was given over to his descendants as a precious legacy. After the manner of the vicissitudes of manuscripts, Nisbet's MS. fell into an ordinary bookseller's hands, and was bought by Sir Alexander Boswell, in whose collection of *Auchinleck Papers* it remained until 1893, when it passed into the possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney, who allowed the Scottish Text Society to publish it.[1]

Murdoch Nisbet of Loudon was, so to speak, the forerunner of the reforming and covenanting folks of Ayrshire in later times: his great-grandson, John Nisbet, was one of Gustavus Adolphus' Scottish officers,

[1] *The New Testament in Scots*, being Purvey's revision of Wycliffe's version turned into Scots by Murdoch Nisbet, *c.* 1520: edited from the unique MS. in the possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney by T. G. Law, LL.D., vol. i. 1901, vol. ii. 1903. Blackwood, Edinburgh.

and as a keen Covenanter commanded a troop of horse at the battle of Bothwell Brig, and was finally executed in 1684 at the Edinburgh Grassmarket.

It was in 1901 that the late learned and beloved Dr. Law of the Signet Library, Edinburgh, published for the Scottish Text Society this interesting MS.—the only version of the New Testament in the Scots language before the Reformation, the only literary relic of the Lollards in Scotland, and an interesting link with continental reforming movements, having been translated from the English Wycliffe's English translation of the Vulgate, and carried through during Nisbet's exile abroad. There can be little or no doubt that the mediæval Church in Scotland, as elsewhere, discountenanced translations of the Scripture into the vulgar language of the people. Service-books in the vernacular with portions of Scripture in them were tolerated, but not encouraged more than was necessary. The spread of the Renaissance spirit in the fifteenth century created a desire in Germany and the Low Countries for the Scripture in the vernacular, and the Brethren of the Common Life fostered this desire. A version in German of the Old Testament only, and incomplete, still existing, is as old as 1400, and the earliest French vernacular Scripture is later, while the earliest Bohemian one dates from 1417. Older versions in the Romana and Teutonic languages existed, as is proved by the records of Church councils. Rellach of Constance, for example, made a translation of the whole Bible into German (1450–70) although he was a thoroughgoing Roman Catholic; yet he felt that the power needed by the world was the Scripture. Other versions, both written and printed, were produced by

men who were friends and defenders of the Church, though none ever came from convent printing-presses. The Brethren of the Common Life, the Waldensians, the German and Bohemian reforming parties, had all their vernacular translations, which were used both by the friends and foes of the Church until finally supplanted by Luther's great Bible to a large extent.

1520 is given as the probable date of Murdoch Nisbet's Scots translation of Wycliffe's New Testament. Where he made it is uncertain, possibly in England, possibly in Germany or the Low Countries, his reference to Luther's prologue to the Bible rather favouring his exile in Germany, where he would find many sympathisers and Lollard friends. After Nisbet there appears another prominent Lollard, John Andrew Duncan of Airdree in Fifeshire and of Maynar in Stirlingshire. Taken prisoner at Flodden, he was brought to Yorkshire, and lodged with one Burnet, a relative of his mother, a strong Lollard. Burnet adopted his Lollard views, and returned to Scotland, where, after a second exile, he settled, and at his own residence promulgated Lollard views, and it is said found many sympathisers in Fifeshire, owing to the fact that English Lollards and German Hussites were students at St. Andrews in the fifteenth century, and thus spread and continued the Wycliffe tradition.[1]

If any Scotsman helped by his writings to advance the cause of religious reform in the land, it was Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, who in his plays and satires prepared the way for the events of 1560.

His *Testament and Complaynt of the Papyngo* are

[1] Principal Lindsay's "Literary Relic of Scottish Lollardy" in *Scottish Historical Review*, i. 270.

a direct echo of Lollard opinions, mingled, no doubt, with the Lutheran ideas which, through the spread of Luther's works in Scotland, had become common property. Lindsay carries forward the Lollard spirit and links it with the Reformation.

Another Lollard link is indicated by Wodrow in his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland,* where he relates how the Gordons of Earlston "used to entertain the disciples of Wycliffe, and had a New Testament in the vulgar tongue, which they used in reading at meetings in the woods about Earlstoun House."

And so link by link the Lollard influence in Scotland can be traced back to the very days of Wycliffe himself, when Scottish students flocked to Balliol to see and hear the man who became known afterwards as "the morning star of the Reformation."

On the eve of the Reformation, Scotland was ready, indeed, for a cleansing of the temple. The highest ecclesiastical offices were often given to laymen and even to children, as in the case of the Archbishopric of St. Andrews, the highest spiritual office in the land, —the primacy of the kingdom,—which, in 1503, was bestowed on the King's natural son, a boy of eight years of age. A letter is still extant in which the King thanks the Pope for confirming this nomination. The wealthiest offices in the Church were thus disposed of, with the result that discipline, order, and government were relaxed, and the people looked with scorn on the disorderly state of the House of God. The aspiration after reform made itself heard over and over again. Patrick Hamilton, a youth of royal descent, appointed Abbot of Fearn at the age of

twenty-three, who, going abroad, met with Luther, Melanchthon, Lambert, and other Reformers, gave forth his work on gospel belief which bears the name of *Patrick's Places*—simply a repetition of the old Lollard teaching.

On 28th February 1528 he was arraigned before the bishops and clergy in St. Andrews, accused of holding Luther's views, and finally burned before the Old College. For doing this the University of St. Andrews was praised by the University of Louvain, and exhorted to continue its good work of extirpating heresy, and more especially of destroying books containing these doctrines. Burning books and burning people was a childish course to adopt; for, as with the heather on the Scottish mountain-side, the burning only made the growth stronger, richer, and fuller. This was abundantly the case in Scotland as the result of Hamilton's martyrdom, for more converts to the cause of reform was the result. When the burning of other individuals was suggested, one John Lindsay, who knew the prelate well, and was a bystander at the martyr's pyre, said to Archbishop Beaton—"My lord, if ye burn any more, except ye follow my counsel ye will utterly destroy yourselves. If ye will burn them, let them be burned in cellars, for the smoke of Master Patrick Hamilton hath infected as many as it blew upon."

It was a somewhat remarkable fact that not only did Patrick Hamilton's burning cause people generally in Scotland to inquire into the nature of the opinions for which so drastic a remedy was necessary, but that even the King's private confessor became a convert to the Lollard ideas. During the Lent following the

burning, Alexander Seaton, the royal confessor, preached a course of sermons in which he laid stress on the necessity of faith in Christ, very much after the style of St. Anselm's "Cur Deus Homo," the need of personal holiness and repentance, while the staple doctrines of the Roman Church — pilgrimages, purgatory, saint-worship, and the like, were absent from his discourses. Suspected of heresy, he became the object of Archbishop Beaton's enmity. That prelate, however, could not proceed against him without the King's assent, and Seaton had reproved King James faithfully for his dissolute and irregular life, admonitions which that Sovereign resented. Feeling instinctively that the King would follow the archbishop's advice, Seaton made good his escape to Berwick, and wrote from thence offering to return if a fair trial were promised him. No answer came, and he fled to London, and was admitted into the Duke of Suffolk's family.

The Reformation was now fairly under weigh in England, the Act of Supremacy being finally passed in 1534, this being followed by the suppression of the monasteries in 1535. Latimer's influence was at its height, while Tyndale's New Testament (1526) and Coverdale's Bible (1535) were spreading the knowledge of Scripture all over the South. Scotland was troubled with civil commotions, and these diverted the attention of the Roman prelates to a considerable extent from the work of suppressing Lollardism. Still, from Hamilton's burning onwards, for ten years the work of crushing the new views went on spasmodically and sporadically, several being put to death, while many had to flee to foreign lands. Henry Forrest, one of the inferior clergy, was suspected of

Lollard sympathies, and a friar called Laing was appointed to hear his confession, which practically resulted in his declaration that he thought Patrick Hamilton's destruction was wrong, as he was a good man. Laing broke the seal of confession, since Forrest had confessed himself a heretic, and thereupon the latter was tried, condemned, and burned at the north side of St. Andrews' Abbey Church, one of the chief counts against him being that he had an English New Testament in his possession.

Many others were imprisoned, fined, and forced to recant, among them a Leith woman who, in the labours of childbirth, instead of asking the Virgin's help called upon Christ to come to her aid. In August 1534, Norman Gourlay and David Stratton were charged with denying purgatory, papal supremacy, and other views. Gourlay was tried before the King, who took a merciful view of the case; but the prelates dissuaded him from granting pardon, declaring that it was outside his powers to do so. Stratton's offence was in regard to the payment of tithe; when the vicar came to take his tithe out of Stratton's fishing-wherry, the latter said that the tithe ought to be taken where the stock grew, and accordingly he threw the fish into the sea and bade the vicar find his tithes there. These two men were publicly burned on ground between Edinburgh and Leith, in 1534, the intention being to strike awe into the Fifeshire people, many of whom were suspected of reforming leanings.

The Archbishop of St. Andrews, James Beaton, died in 1539, and the Pope, who viewed with alarm the triumph of the Reformation in England, and dreaded

a repetition of the same disaster in Scotland, which for long had been "the special daughter of the Roman See," appointed David Beaton, the previous archbishop's nephew, to succeed him in St. Andrews as primate of Scotland. He was a cool, deliberate, cruel character, and the hope of the Pope was that by direct acts of oppression the movement would be killed. One of the first to be brought to the new prelate's tribunal was Sir John Borthwick, who was charged with holding Lollard and Gospeller views, and with having in his possession an English New Testament. Borthwick managed to get into hiding and reached England at last, his views being publicly condemned at St. Andrews, and his effigy burned, since the original was off to the South. Strange to say, his relative John, the fifth Lord Borthwick, opposed the Reformation in 1560, and was Queen Mary's friend and helper, shielding her and Bothwell in his beautiful twin-towered Borthwick Castle by the sweetly-flowing Tyne, and surrounded by the green, undulating Moorfoot Hills. Though he was a staunch supporter of the "ancient religion," his servants, who seem to have had sympathies in the opposite direction, seized the person of William Langlands, a macer from St. Andrews, who arrived with letters of excommunication of Lord Borthwick on account of the contumacy of certain witnesses of his in a lawsuit. The unhappy *bacularius* arrived while the Castle folks were celebrating the sport of the Abbot of Unreason, and the primate's officer was twice ducked in the river; and then, having been sufficiently bathed, had refreshments given him after his cold bath, the letters of excommunication being torn to pieces, steeped in a

bowl of wine, and forced upon the unwilling apparitor, who had to eat and drink the nauseous preparation, to which a stimulating touch was added by the Abbot of Unreason informing him that if any more such letters arrived they should "a' gang the same gait."

Sir John Borthwick's escape caused the new Beaton considerable indignation, and he proceeded with even greater firmness against other suspects. Dean Thomas Forrest, vicar of Dollar and a canon of St. Colomb, was one of the first to be brought to book, and mainly because he preached every Sunday to the people from the Gospel or Epistle for the day. It must be remembered that the parish priests and even bishops had given up preaching almost entirely, and confined themselves to the celebration of the Church's rites and ceremonies—the pictorial teaching of the Church. The only preachers were the friars; and their addresses, as already indicated, were strange medleys of sacred and secular lore, amusing legends and stories, and jokes intended to amuse the people and tickle the mob. Mr. Baring-Gould has in his *Post-mediæval Preachers* furnished many laughable examples of the friars' discourses. In preaching the simple gospel to his flock, gathered together at Dollar under the shadow of the rolling Ochil Hills, and close by Castle Campbell or Castle Gloom, with the two streams Care and Sorrow rippling past it, Dean Forrest declared the riches of Christ's gospel in simple language and with telling effect. Summoned by his bishop (Dunkeld), he was asked why he persisted in preaching Sunday by Sunday. The Bishop of Dunkeld thus addressed him—"My joy [beloved] dean Thomas, I am informed that you preach the epistle or the gospel every Sunday

to your parishioners, and that you take not the best cow nor the uppermost cloth from your parishioners, which is very prejudicial to other Churchmen. Therefore, my joy dean Thomas, I would you took your cow and your uppermost cloth as other Churchmen do. Also it is too much to preach every Sunday: for in so doing you may make the people think that we should preach likewise. It is enough for you when you find any good epistle or any good gospel that setteth forth the liberty [privileges] of the holy Church, to preach on that and let the rest be." Dean Forrest replied,—"That with respect to the cow and the cloth, himself and his parishioners were agreed: and as for preaching every Sunday, he could wish that his lordship did the like." The bishop replied—"Nay, nay, dean Thomas, let that be, for we are not ordained to preach." Forrest answered—"Your lordship biddeth me preach when I find any good Epistle or good Gospel: truly, my lord, I have read the New Testament and the Old and all the Epistles and Gospels, and among them all I could never find an evil Epistle or an evil Gospel: but if your lordship will show me one that is evil, I will shun it." To which the bishop gave the famous retort—"I thank God that I never knew what Old and New Testaments were. I will know nothing but my portass and my pontifical. Go your way and let alone these fantasies or you will repent it." Forrest said—"I trust my cause is just in the presence of God, and therefore I am not anxious as to consequences." Soon after, he was summoned before Cardinal Beaton, condemned, and burned on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh along with two friars named Kelow and Bevarage, a priest

of Stirling named Sympson, and a Stirling gentleman named Foster, all of whom made profession of their adherence to the Lollard beliefs.

About the same time the Archbishop of Glasgow condemned two others to death, Russel and Kennedy. Kennedy was a youth of eighteen, and was about to recant when he saw the preparations for his execution being made; but he was not allowed to do so. His last words were — "O Eternal God, how wonderful is that love and mercy which Thou bearest to mankind, and to me, the most miserable wretch above all others. For even now, when I would have denied Thee and Thy Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, my only Saviour, and so have cast myself into everlasting damnation, Thou by Thine own hand hast pulled me from the very bottom of hell, and made me to feel that heavenly comfort which takes from me that ungodly fear wherewith before I was oppressed. Now I defy death: do what ye please: I praise my God I am ready!" The inquisitors disputed with Russel, and made mockery of his beliefs; to which he replied—"This is your hour and the power of darkness: now you sit as judges, and we stand wrongfully condemned; but the day cometh which will show our innocence, and you shall see your own blindness, to your everlasting confusion: go forward, and fulfil the measure of your iniquity."

Hearing so bold a confession from one who feared God and knew no other fear, a fear which strengthens as the fear of man weakens, the archbishop declared that he thought these persecutions did more harm than good, and seemed disposed to pardon these two men; but he was threatened by his clergy, that if he

allowed them to escape he would be reported to Cardinal Beaton; and accordingly they were executed, Russel encouraging Kennedy, and saying—"Brother, fear not; more mighty is He that is in us than he that is in the world. The pain we shall suffer will be short and light; but our joy and consolation will never end. Let us strive to enter in unto our Master and Saviour by the same strait way that He hath taken before us. Death cannot destroy us; for it is destroyed already by Him for whose sake we suffer."

The King, situated as he was between France and England, within a circle of traditional policy, in dealing with each could take but one course in the Reformation struggle, and that entire submission to the lead of Cardinal Beaton and the Queen. The Lollard persecution is hinted at in the item—"deliverit to twa pure wemen for ij ky the tyme that the man was byrnt in Cowpar; to messenger to pas and serche thair gudis quhilkis war obiurit and declirt heretikis in Edinburgh and Stirling." Two Lollards also were burned at the west end of Glasgow Cathedral.

Following upon this, Beaton received authority from the King to proceed still more rigorously, and a list of suspected persons, numbering three hundred and sixty, including many prominent nobles and gentlemen, and notably the Earl of Arran, the presumptive heir to James v.'s crown, was drawn up with a view to their trial for heresy. Political complications, however, deferred further drastic action, as the ambitious and high-handed policy of Beaton brought about that disastrous war with England, the

end of which was the death of the King. His Queen, Mary of Guise, had just given birth to her who afterwards became Mary Queen of Scots, and the sorely troubled and bitterly disappointed Sovereign passed away. Solway Moss broke his heart; and when he heard of his daughter's birth, he took a melancholy view of the future, declaring of his crown that "It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass." "The King of the Poor," as his humbler subjects styled him —"The Gudeman of Ballangeich," as he was called from his disguised wanderings through his realm, James v. was the victim of circumstances, and a prey to misfortune.

After the death-scene at Falkland Palace, Cardinal Beaton strove for political supremacy, but he was unsuccessful, and the Earl of Arran was made Regent, who brought persecution to a standstill, and eventually gave permission to "every man to read the translation of the Old and New Testaments." For a moment fortune favoured the cause of Reform, and many professed to have possessed and read the Scripture in secret for years, with a view to being favourably regarded by Arran. The Regent, however, lacked courage, firmness, and constancy, and Beaton again became the chief power in Scotland, Arran consenting to his measures. A great increase of heresy was complained of, and in January 1544, Cardinal Beaton, the Earl of Arran, and others arrived at Perth and began another heresy-hunt. Robert Lambe, William Anderson, and two others were charged with false doctrine and practices, the only apparent fault with them seeming to have been that they regaled themselves with a goose on Halloween; and yet they

were executed as heretics; while the wife of a Perth burgess, who at childbirth invoked Christ and not the Virgin, and who also broke her fast like the preceding, was condemned. She wished to die with her husband, but this last consideration was refused; and though she was nursing her newborn infant, she was taken down to the water and ruthlessly drowned. "I will not" she said to her husband, "bid you good-night, for we shall suddenly meet with joy in the kingdom of heaven."

But the most outstanding victim of the persecuting movement of this period was George Wishart, a learned and pious scholar, who in 1540 was ordered by the Bishop of Brechin to leave Scotland for teaching the Greek Testament in Montrose. He escaped first to Germany, and then found refuge in Ben'et College in Cambridge, where he was known, according to Tylney, a scholar there, as "a man, modest, temperate, fearing God, hating covetousness, for his charity never had end: he forebore one meal in three, and one day in four for the most part. He lay hard, upon a puff of straw, and coarse new canvas sheets, which, when he changed, he gave away. He loved me tenderly, and I him for my age, effectually. Oh, that the Lord had left him to me, his poor boy, that he might have finished that he had begun." There was at this period in Cambridge an earnest band of students who took life earnestly, rising daily at four or five and reading the Scriptures and praying till six, their dinner consisting of "a parmy piece of beef among four, a little pottage made of the broth, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else." After several hours of study they had an ascetic supper, and then from six

till ten resumed their studies, "and being without fire, would walk or run up and down half an hour to get their feet warm, when they went to bed." Wishart was in his element in such society and loved it, but in 1544 he saw his way clear to return to Scotland, where he began to preach against Roman corruptions and abuses, drawing large crowds and making a deep impression. Cardinal Beaton was enraged at his boldness, and resolved on his annihilation. Dundee was visited by the plague, and Wishart stood by the people, visiting the sick and comforting the sorrowful. Assassination was attempted, a friar with a dagger under his habit even threatening him as he came down from the pulpit. He next visited Montrose and Edinburgh, and was at last arrested at Ormiston and brought to St. Andrews a prisoner.

Cardinal Beaton and the Archbishop of Glasgow had been at variance for some time, chiefly owing to the old-standing and deep-seated jealousy between the two Sees, but over Wishart they struck hands in friendly agreement. On 1st February 1545, Wishart was brought to the Church of St. Andrews, where the sub-prior of the Abbey preached on the wheat and the tares (St. Matt. xiii. 24), and urged the destruction of heretical tares. Wishart was then placed in the pulpit, and a list of charges against him was read. He knelt down and asked help from Heaven, and then rose and asked to be allowed to declare his beliefs; but this the prelates declined to allow. The accusations were again read over, but as soon as Wishart attempted to reply he was insolently silenced. He then declared that he had only exhorted men to follow Christ the only Mediator, and challenged his accusers to prove

the doctrine of purgatory. Beaton then ordered the fire to be prepared, and Wishart was sent to the Castle till all was ready. The sub-prior had a conference with him there, and, bursting into tears, asked if he would receive the Communion, which Wishart said he would be glad to do in both kinds. The sub-prior then went to Beaton and declared Wishart to be an innocent man, and asked whether he might receive the sacrament, but this was refused. At breakfast, Wishart, whom the captain of the Castle had invited to join in, spoke about the death and sufferings of Christ, and exhorted them all to love and good works. Thereafter two executioners arrived, fastened bags of powder about him, and bound his hands. The stake was erected at the west gate of the Castle near the priory, and the windows of the Castle overlooked the tragic scene. The cardinal and other prelates sat at the windows, which were richly decorated; and the Castle guns were charged, lest the people should attempt a rescue. Two friars urged him to pray to the Virgin, but Wishart only called upon God for His benediction; and, having prayed for his accusers, the executioner begged his forgiveness and lit the pyre. "This fire," he said, "torments my body, but no wise abates my spirit. He who in such state from that high place feedeth his eyes with my torments, within a few days shall be hanged out at the same window with as much ignominy as he now leaneth there with pride."

Beaton thought this terrible example would check the Reform movement; but popular disgust was the result, and Beaton was put to death, and his body hung out of the Castle window as Wishart had pro-

phesied. The Reform movement received an immense impetus: political considerations and a growing desire for liberty added additional force to a tendency already strong and determined, and finally Knox appeared as its champion and leader. Knox was the child of Wishart, and carried forward the movement for civil and religious liberty to triumphant success. The persecuting section of the Roman Church thought that by wringing the neck of the cock they would prevent the dawning of the day; but the day came in spite of all the attempts to keep the sky black and the clock at midnight.

When a Pope dies, his chamberlain, in presence of the College of Cardinals, taps his head thrice with a small hammer of ivory and gold. The act is performed to make sure that he is really dead. When Luther with his hammer drove the nails into the church door of Würtemberg, it was to waken the Church from its deadly sleep; and that hammer was originally forged at Lutterworth, and the reverberations and echoes of its strokes have gone round the earth. From the turretted steeple of Lutterworth came the gentle yet strong voice which found its echo of alarm under the dome of St. Peter's. The ashes which were sent ignominiously down the Swift, in the course of their world-wide dissemination floated up the Tiber, and were washed on to the shore at the Castle of St. Angelo. Between Wycliffe and Luther there is the relationship of ancestor and offspring, and the spirit of the two men, so different in many respects, and separated by generations, was wonderfully similar in its courage, faith, and hope; for while Wycliffe in his hour of sickness could say—"I shall not die, but live, and

declare the evil works of the friars," Luther's determined fortitude was not behind it when he declared that he would pursue his course of reform though there were as many devils arrayed against him as there were tiles on the roofs of Worms.

CHAPTER III

Lollardism on the Continent

Curious as was the spread of Lollardism in Scotland the diffusion of the Wycliffe opinions on the Continent, and more particularly in Bohemia, was even more remarkable. Practically the same diffusive forces were at work in both places, namely, students from both countries studying at Oxford, the headquarters of Wycliffism, and carrying home with them the fresh inspirations of the university whose motto was and still is—"Dominus illuminatio mea," along with the enlightened religious faith which found its choicest nursery by the Isis. In 1382, to revert to the initial links between England and Bohemia, Richard II., king of England, married Princess Anne of Bohemia, who, coming to England, embraced the Lollard doctrines with devout and whole-hearted enthusiasm. Her life as Queen of England only lasted twelve short years, for she passed away in 1394, leaving behind her a fragrant memory. She had been the daughter of the Emperor Charles IV., and was the sister of the "good King Wenceslaus" of Bohemia, whose Christmas-tide charity and compassion are celebrated in the Yule-tide carol still sung amid the holly-covered pillars of our churches, when the snow is on the ground and "the Christmas bells from hill to hill answer each other in the mist."

Richard buried her in Westminster Abbey, for his own heart was in Westminster. His coronation had taken place in the Abbey with unsurpassed splendour, and was distinguished by the creation of the "Knights of the Bath," ever since associated with coronations. It was he who took Edward the Confessor as his patron saint, and rebuilt the great northern entrance of the Abbey for ever associated with St. Edward's shrine, besides building Westminster Hall. Richard's affection for his Bohemian bride was such that when she died at the Palace of Sheen, he not only abandoned and cursed the place, but actually pulled it down to the ground. Her funeral was a pageant of mournful magnificence, and Froissart tells us that abundance of wax was brought from Flanders to make torches, and that the illumination was so great as to be dazzling. The tomb now pointed out in the Abbey as that of Richard and Queen Anne is a coarse copy of Edward III.'s, and fills up the whole large end bay in that royal chapel where the suns of empire rise and set. The names of all the artificers—all citizens of London —have been preserved, and the cost of the erection was £10,000, and the date of its completion 1397. The King and Queen are represented in a recumbent position; and orginally their right hands were tenderly clasped, but both arms have been stolen. The effigies are of mixed metal richly gilded, and are certainly portraits of the loving royal pair.

Among the other badges and patterns stamped over the tomb are the two-headed eagle and the lion of Bohemia, while on the inside of the wooden canopy over the tomb are painted pictures of the Trinity, the Virgin's Coronation, and Queen Anne's coat of arms.

A Latin rhyming inscription is carved round the edge, like that on the tomb of Edward III.

This was the woman who brought England and Bohemia into such close contact, and was the instrument of carrying Lollardism into the land of her birth, and thereby inoculated Eastern Europe with the reforming views. Three hundred years before, the English Princess Margaret, by marrying Malcolm Canmore, king of Scots, did exactly the reverse for the Scottish Church, by her powerful influence gradually supplanted the ancient Culdee clergy by the more vigorous and missionary Roman priests from her native England. Princess Anne of Bohemia, however, reversed that procedure as regards her native land, and encouraged Bohemian students to come to Oxford. She had many of her countrymen at her Court, and these knew what Lollardism meant very well from their mistress' words and actions. She herself, according to Wycliffe, had the Scriptures in the Latin Vulgate and also in English and Bohemian. The students from Prague University, whom she induced to study at Oxford and imbibe the reforming views, took home with them to Bohemia Wycliffe's tracts and Scriptures, and thus the influence spread abroad. Jerome of Prague was one of the most distinguished of these Bohemian students at Oxford; but there must have been many much earlier, for John Huss, who was the powerful national outcome of the Oxford influence, declares in his *Treatise against Stokes* (1411) that Wycliffe's works had been familiar to him for twenty years. Students seem to have come from Prague to Oxford pretty steadily for something like twenty years, the last recorded names being Nicholas Faulfisch and George of

Knienitz, who revised Wycliffe's *Truth of Scripture* in 1407.

The reforming influence which thus filtered from Oxford into Bohemia had eventually its most striking issue in John Huss, who graduated at Prague University in 1393 and became Master of Arts in 1396. No city in Germany surpassed it in grandeur of appearance, and the University or Carolinum of the capital of Bohemia was the first great institution of the kind planted among the German peoples, while the grave of the world-famed astronomer Tycho Brahe is within the beautiful Theinkirche, and adds to the historical charm of a wonderfully historical city to-day.

The great festival days of Prague have always been that of St. Wenceslaus, the old patron Saint of Bohemia, celebrated in the Christmas carol, and that of St. John Nepomuk, whom the same King Wenceslaus threw from the bridge of Prague because he refused to reveal what his Queen had told him under seal of confession. But the name of John Huss and his influence are the striking notes of the beautiful city. Even yet his life was all along identified with the university of which he became a lecturer in 1398 and the rector in 1402, a post which he held until April 1403. The subjects of his lectures seem to have been the text-books of Prague, Paris, and Oxford. At Stockholm there is preserved a translation of Wycliffe's *Five Philosophical Treatises*, made in 1398, which seems to show that these treatises formed the subject of some of his earlier prelections.

In 1402 John of Müllheim presented Huss to the post of select preacher or curate to the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, where he was bound to preach in

Bohemian, and his preparations for the pulpit led him to careful study of Scripture and of Wycliffe's writings, which were by this time fairly well known in the city on the Moldau. The spirit of Reform had caught hold of him, and he strove to inflame others with it, including the chief ecclesiastics of the place. On 28th May 1403 a series of disputations was begun in the university on the Wycliffe views, with the result that the twenty-four theses condemned at the Black-friars Synod in 1382, along with twenty-one others, were proscribed, and the teaching of them forbidden. Wycliffe's independent spirit, however, had its resurrection in Huss, who continued his lectures and defence of the forty-five condemned theses. Huss' boldness brought about the passing of a statute forbidding bachelors to lecture on Wycliffe's *Trialogus* and *De Eucharistia* or any other of the Lutterworth rector's writings, which seemed to have become quite the rage in Prague. Whatever was the motive, Sbynjek, archbishop of Prague (1403), made Huss preacher to the Synod,—an opportunity which he used vigorously in pressing his reforming views upon the crowds who flocked to Bethlehem Chapel to hear him, until at last his utterances became so bluntly bold that the archbishop in 1408 withdrew his favour from him, and joined those both in Church and State who desired the arrest of the Lollard and reforming movement.

The rivalries between Bohemia and Germany accentuated matters. Wenceslaus, ambitious to become Emperor, was afraid that Wycliffe's doctrines might hinder his designs. The question of the rival Popes divided the university, Germans and Bohemians taking opposite sides, until finally the German influence

triumphed and the Bohemians seceded and founded the University of Leipsic, of which Huss was in 1409 elected rector. At last strong measures were taken against the bold apostle of Reform, who had succeeded in impregnating his views on the University of Prague so successfully among the multitude of students who resorted to it from all quarters, and which is said to have had at one time the almost incredible number of forty thousand. The spirit of free inquiry brought its fruit, and, under the zealous teaching of Huss, Jerome, and others, the corruptions of the Church were exposed and the seeds of reform sown. The archbishop who had befriended him reported the dangerous tendencies to Rome, and Pope Alexander II. issued several Bulls denouncing the Lollard views, one of these, dated 9th March 1409, authorising four doctors of theology and four of canonical law to examine into the matter and take steps for the suppression of Wycliffe's heresy, so successfully imported from England. Inquiry was made as to the extent to which Wycliffe's writings were in circulation; and Huss along with others loyally brought his Wycliffe books before the Commission, and these were publicly burned on the 16th July 1409, Huss and all his followers being excommunicated. This was as unpopular a step in Bohemia as the condemnation of Wycliffe was in England. Both men were the expressions and exponents of the popular religious aspirations of the age, of the longing of the world for a glimpse of the angels and a vision of the Eternal. Not that that vision was non-existent in the Church: far from it; but ceremonialism, mechanicalism, formalism, and materialism had dimmed its beauty and marred its

glory. Undeterred by his excommunication, by his surrender of Wycliffe's treatises, which really constituted his spiritual armoury, or the prohibition on preaching in unconsecrated buildings of which Bethlehem Chapel, where Huss held forth, was the main one in question,—Huss still continued to preach and to teach in the chapel with a fresh earnestness and zeal.

Pope Alexander died in 1410, and his successor, John XXIII., renewed proceedings against Huss and the Lollards. Papal envoys came to Prague and argued in favour of proceedings against Wycliffe's disciples; but the King, Queen, and nobles deplored these, and asked that the Pope's sentence should be reversed. This was to no purpose, and Huss and his followers were again proceeded against, thus making a deeper cleavage between the Bohemian Court and the Pope. In 1411 the archbishop died, and proceedings were stayed. To support the papal claim of urgency, the Carthusian prior of Dolau near Olmütz published a book, entitled, *The Marrow of Wheat, or anti-Wiclif*, in which he described how Wycliffe's doctrines had spread all over Bohemia, and attacked Wycliffe in no moderate manner. In addition to this, Huss at this time appealed to the Bohemian people in regard to the crusade proclaimed against King Ladislas of Naples, who was the strong supporter of Gregory XII. the anti-Pope. The people of Prague, ever loyal to Huss, answered the appeal and burned the Bulls relating to the crusade; while three young men, who were martyred because of the part they had taken in the matter, were buried in the Bethlehem Chapel as saints and martyrs.

The University of Prague, instigated by Rome, renewed its attack on Huss, and again condemned Wycliffe's forty-five heresies, adding six of Huss' heresies, and appealed to the King to stay the spread of Wycliffism, and to forbid Huss to preach. King Wenceslaus agreed to stop the flow of Lollardism, but refused to forbid Huss to exercise his preaching gifts. Pope John XXIII. was appealed to, and Peter of St. Angelo, a cardinal-deacon, was sent to deal with Huss. Huss was allowed twenty-one days in which to recant, and in the event of his refusal he was to be excommunicated and his Bethlehem Chapel razed to the ground. An immense tumult was the result, and even the King begged Huss to retire. In December 1412 he went into voluntary exile, after publishing his appeal to Christ as the supreme Judge. A synod was held at Prague to settle all the disputed points, but it resulted in nothing, while Huss continued boldly to preach Wycliffe's doctrines. Pope John XXIII. summoned a council at Rome to establish his position against the rival Pope; but while no practical issue came of it, Wycliffe's *Dialogus*, *Trialogus*, and other writings were condemned, and bishops were required to search out and burn his books, and anyone undertaking to defend Wycliffe's memory was ordered to appear before the Pope within nine months. All these smaller ecclesiastical movements were, however, eclipsed by the Council of Constance, which Pope John XXIII. called at the instance of Sigismund, king of Hungary, and Rome, the object of which was to unite the Roman Church under one head and break the power of schism and heresy.

It was a remarkable gathering of the spiritual forces

of Europe, and John XXIII., the Vicar of Christ, who had against him two anti-Popes, Benedict XIII. at Avignon and Gregory XII. at Rimini, was charged with profaneness and impiety, and fled to Schaffhausen, though his abdication did not take place till a year later. After this the council proceeded in its deliberations without a Pope, and asserted its own supreme authority in conformity with earlier tradition, which placed the Pope under the authority of general councils. The King, Sigismund, managed to persuade Huss to attend this general council of the Catholic Church, promising him safe-conduct and fair play, in the hope that Huss would prove himself a loyal son of the Church.

The Council of Constance was one of the most remarkable assemblies of the Christian Church in the whole world's history. It aimed at reform and unity, and yet it would have no patience with the reforming spirit, which even then was abroad among the people of many lands. The Wycliffe doctrines formed an early topic of discussion in that memorable Council, and once more the forty-five articles were condemned as heresies, while two hundred and sixty other heretical doctrines gathered out of Wycliffe's works were laid before the fathers, who, however, had not patience enough to hear them. At last, on 4th May 1415, the council pronounced Wycliffe "the leader of heresy in that age," and a disseminator of false Christianity. Wycliffe's works were ordered to be burned and his bones to be disinterred from Lutterworth churchyard, "if they can be distinguished from the bones of the faithful, and burned also." After this act of denunciation of the dead the council proceeded against the living,

and Huss, who had been kept in prison until then, was summoned to the council on the 5th of June, his trial lasting for three days. Against him thirty-nine articles were tabled, twenty-six from his book on the *Church*, seven from his controversy with Dr. Palecz, and six from his reply to Stanislaus, these latter two divines being the leading doctors of the University of Prague, who in 1413 had been appointed to expose the Hussite errors. In his defence John Huss gave explanations of many points in which he had been misunderstood, and also defended his own religious beliefs. "The Church," he declared, "was governed infinitely better in the time of the apostles than now. What can hinder Jesus Christ from governing it by His true disciples? Though I say the Church has no head at present, yet Jesus Christ ceaseth not to govern it."

Huss was asked to recant the whole of his heresies, but he begged the council in God's name not to charge him with views never held by him, more especially in regard to the sacrament, in which he believed the elements after consecration were no longer material bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ. For his other views he said he was prepared to vindicate himself. He was then charged with having publicly read the letter from Oxford University in favour of Wycliffe (6th October 1406), which he acknowledged to have done, as it bore the seal of the university. Another letter from Oxford University was then handed in by the English delegates to the Council, summing up two hundred heresies in Wycliffe's writings, and asking them to be condemned. It seemed as if the sins of Wycliffe were to be visited on Huss with double vengeance. Sigismund's safe-conduct was

urged in Huss' favour, but in vain, and on 24th June his writings were burned, and on 6th July he himself was burned to death. Even his enemies declared the sentence unjust, as he had never denied transubstantiation, though this was often urged against him.

Huss claimed to be an orthodox Christian confessor, and in a letter declares—"To justify myself I recall to my memory the great number of holy men, of the old and new covenant, who have undergone martyrdom rather than transgress the law: and I who for so many years have preached up patience and constancy under trials,—I, to fall into perjury—I, so shamefully to scandalise the people of God! Far, far from me be the thought. The Lord Jesus will be my succour and my recompense." To his disciple, the priest Martin, he wrote—"Fear not to die if thou desirest to live with Christ: for He has Himself said—'Fear not them that kill the body but who cannot kill the soul.' Should they seek after thee, on account of thy adhesion to my doctrines, make them this reply, 'I believe that my master was a good Christian; but as to what regards his writings and his instructions, I have neither read all nor comprehend all.'"

Huss seems to have remained full of courage to the very close, for in a late letter he says—"And I also, wretched that I am, if that could contribute to His glory, to the advantage of believers and my own good, could be also delivered by the Lord from chains and death. The power of Him who freed from prison by an angel St. Peter when ready to die at Jerusalem, and who caused the chains to fall from his hands, is not diminished. But the will of the Lord be done! may it be accomplished in me for His glory and for my sins."

Huss was only forty-five when, with his habit around him, he was burned to death. In an old manuscript copy of his works the following words are written:—"As long as John Huss merely declaimed against the vices of the seculars, everyone said that he was inspired with the spirit of God; but as soon as he proceeded against ecclesiastics, he became an object of odium, for he then really laid his finger on the sore." He was a thorough Roman Catholic, believing in transubstantiation, confession, the intercession of the saints, the adoration of images, works, purgatory, and tradition. Even through an unworthy priest, he held, God works spiritually. Huss was no enemy of Roman doctrines, but only opposed their abuse and extremer consequences. The real causes of the severity of the sentence against Huss were that he saw in the riches of the clergy the source of their spiritual decline and ineptitude; and, secondly, that while he professed himself obedient to the voice of the Church's council, he attached to this the condition that his own conscience approved, and that the Scripture was obeyed. This, of course, was the foundation-principle of reformation, the recognition of Scripture interpreted by private judgment as an authority superior to Church decisions.

The day after Huss' execution a notice was affixed to the doors of all the churches in Constance in these words:—"The Holy Ghost to the believers of Constance, greeting: Pay attention to your affairs: as to Us, being occupied elsewhere, we cannot remain any longer in the midst of you. Adieu." The charming old city of Baden, stretching along the shore of the Lake of Constance, will for ever be memorable as

the scene of the deliberations of a council professedly guided by the Holy Spirit but wofully lacking in His fruits, as that church-door notice grimly indicated. In the fine old cathedral, dating back to 1052, with its majestic nave supported by sixteen pillars, each one a single block of stone, there is a brass plate on the floor marking the spot where Huss stood when he received his death-sentence there in 1415. To-day, Constance has many Hussite memorials: his first prison, the Franciscan convent, is in ruins; his second prison, the Dominican monastery, is now a cotton factory; the house where he resided before his imprisonment is still standing; and the guides point out the place in a field outside the town where his stake was raised. The famous council met in the merchants' hall or Kauf-haus, built in 1388, and sat from 1414–18, committing Huss and Jerome of Prague to the flames as a proof of their earnestness in defending the truth, though some of its decisions were lamentably lacking in evidence of spiritual guidance. One of these stands out in lurid colours. The question was submitted to the fathers in Council as to the justification of the murder of the Duke of Orleans by the Duke of Burgundy. There had been a long feud between the Orleans and the Burgundy factions, and in 1412 the triumphant Orleans party got the University of Paris to condemn seven propositions extracted by its chancellor, the famous Gerson, to whom some have attributed the *Imitation of Christ*, from the pleadings of John Petit, who had made an apology for and defence of the murder. Petit had argued at length that it was lawful to kill any tyrant who hatched evil against the King, and that the slayer should receive

royal rewards, just as Michael the archangel was rewarded for turning Lucifer out of Paradise and Phinehas for cutting off Zimri. These and other sentiments as to the validity of oaths were condemned at the famous "Council of the Faith" held in 1413, and the King ordered the Parliaments of the kingdom to inscribe the sentence in their registers. The Duke of Burgundy appealed to the Pope, John XXIII., who appointed the cardinals of Florence, Aquileia, and Des Ursius to examine into the matter. The Bishop of Paris, who had condemned the doctrines, had his sentence quashed by them, and accordingly Charles VI. appealed to the Constance Council, sending as his own representatives and pleaders two bishops and several doctors, of whom the most brilliant was Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris. At the council, Gerson denounced Petit's doctrines with the utmost warmth, declaring that the apology for the murder was more dangerous than the murder itself. And yet Gerson and Huss had much in common, and were both good and great men; and in the matter of Petit, Gerson strove to clear his soul and conscience of all evil. As a Christian, Gerson's beautiful treatise, *De parvulis ad Christum trahendis*, is tender, placid, and generous; but when the theological rancour was on him he became fierce, bitter, and relentless; and in his opposition to Petit's views he was strongly seconded by Peter D'Ailly, the cardinal of Cambray, his friend and former master. Altogether Gerson engaged in twenty-two discussions on Petit's theses, and finally he himself with D'Ailly was accused of heresy. The chief charges against Gerson were that he prevented Christians from obeying the Pope, holding that there

was a higher law and tribunal, and hinting that if John Huss had had certain advocates, he would not have been condemned. Gerson clung to his belief in the power of general councils, and placed their decisions above those of Rome.

The Council of Constance was an enormous and phenomenal gathering of an international character. The main object of the gathering was to settle the peace of the Church. The Council of Pisa had nominally secured unity, and yet Benedict XIII. was still vigorous in Spain and Gregory XII. had a standing in Italy. The Council of Pisa had declared for Pope John, but the acceptance of him was by no means universal. The Council of Constance divided itself into four nations,—Italian, German, French, and English, and each nation deliberated on the question of the Popedom separately. The result was that all the nations except the Italian urged that John XXIII. should abdicate, and finally he undertook to do so if Gregory and Benedict would do the same. The disputes between Sigismund and the French became accentuated. John took an independent attitude, and fled from Constance on 20th March, establishing himself at Schaffhausen. The council declared its independence of the Pope, and went on with its business. Ere March closed John retired to Laufenburg, lower down on the Rhine, and protested against the council's validity. On 30th March, at its fourth session, the council declared itself independent of the Holy See, and even superior to it.

In the meantime the cardinals, seeing the reforming spirit in the council, became alarmed, and, fearing that their interests might be hurt, began to consider

the position. John XXIII. was charged with a long list of crimes, and on 29th May was deposed by the council, which also agreed that none of the other papal candidates should be recognised, and that no new election should take place without its sanction. The Council of Pisa had set aside two Popes, and recommended John XXIII.; now the Council of Constance deposed him. What a shock to Christendom it must have been to see the warrings over the vicarage of Christ, over the person of him who claimed to be the supreme judge and director of the consciences of men,—of the peasant that tills the field, of the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that lives in the shade of privacy, and the Legislature that makes laws for kingdoms, who claims to be the sole, last, supreme judge of what is right and wrong.

The Council of Constance was a reforming council. It deposed John XXIII.; a few weeks later Gregory XII. abdicated, and Benedict XIII. held a nominal position as Pope in Spain. To eradicate heresy, it burned John Huss, and then proceeded to destroy Jerome of Prague, his most ardent disciple. Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, and his nobles were incensed at Huss' treatment and the threats against Jerome, and a letter was addressed to the council, in which, while expressing their devotion to the Roman Church, they declared their intention to allow God's word to be freely preached, and their hope that a worthy Pope might soon be elected. It was the old Wycliffe difficulty over again,—the desire to remain within the Roman Church and yet their thirst for evangelical preaching, teaching, and living. Jerome was at this

time in irons in the tower of St. Paul's cemetery. The council was irritated at the Bohemian nobles' menacing letter, and, while anxious to put down heresy, hesitated to destroy Jerome for fear of vengeance. Jerome was pressed to abjure, and, being weak and depressed, like Cranmer he retracted and submitted to the Council. But while he retracted in a way, he still declared his adhesion to the holy truths taught by Wycliffe and John Huss. The Council was dissatisfied. The Cardinal of Cambray and others urged that he, arguing on realist grounds, had obeyed the council; but Nason, strong in his orthodoxy, lectured the favourable cardinals, saying, "We are much astonished to find you interceding for this pestiferous heretic, from whom we have received so much injury in Bohemia, and who could very easily cause as much to yourselves. Is it possible that you have been gained over by bribes from the King of Bohemia or from the heretics? Can they have purchased from you the liberty of this man?" At this the cardinals demanded to be freed from their position as commissioners against Jerome, and new ones were elected,—John de Rocha, Gerson's fierce adversary, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, John Huss' ardent persecutor. Huss saw that his hour had come, and, indignant at the injustice of the charges made against him, he courageously declared—"As to me, I am only a feeble mortal,—my life is of but little importance: and when I exhort you not to deliver an unjust sentence, I speak less for myself than for you." After having been given several diets to plead his cause, he was condemned, and crowned with a high paper crown on which were painted

demons in flames. "Jesus Christ," cried Jerome, in the very same memorable and historical words which Huss had used, and which had become proverbial among the reforming spirits,—"who died for me a sinner, wore a crown of thorns. I will willingly wear this for Him." At the very place where Huss had suffered he was burned, repeating the Apostles' Creed, the Litanies, and a Hymn to the Virgin. "This creed," he said, addressing the crowd, "which I have just sung is my real profession of faith: I die, therefore, only for not having consented to acknowledge that John Huss was justly condemned. I declare that I have always beheld in him a true preacher of the gospel." The ashes of his body, clothes, and belongings were gathered and thrown into the Rhine, to destroy all memory of him; but the very ground where his stake was placed was hollowed out, and the earth carried into Bohemia and guarded like earth from the Holy Land with loving care. With childish pique the same council, more than a quarter of a century after his death, ordained that Wycliffe's ashes should get the same treatment, and so his body was exhumed and burned, and the ashes thrown into the Swift; but the Swift bore them into the Wye; and the Wye carried them, as old Fuller says in an oft-quoted passage, into the Severn, and the Severn into the sea—and the sea into the ocean, typical of the way in which the Wycliffe doctrines have been carried all over the world.

PART III

RESULTS OF WYCLIFFE'S TEACHING WITHIN THE ROMAN CHURCH

THE opinions of Wycliffe were destined to have an infinitely wider and deeper influence than either his enemies imagined or he himself ever dreamt. To begin with, his attacks on Church abuses aroused the Church to set her house in order. The action of the Church in first burning and scattering the Reformer's bones and then acting on his opinions and adopting many of his suggestions as to ecclesiastical reform, is strongly suggestive of the Hindu tale, in which an elephant-tamer was hopelessly at a loss what to do with one of his animals which refused to do his bidding. At last he gave the truncated quadruped a severe beating. Some hours later his heart was touched, softened, and melted, when, looking out of the verandah, he saw the whipped animal on his hindlegs endeavouring to go through the tricks and perform the steps which he obstinately refused to do before. The Roman Church, like the Oriental quadruped of wisdom, profited by Wycliffe's lash, and quietly tried the steps he had indicated in the way of reform. The reforming Councils of Constance,

Pisa, and the rest were the first results of Wycliffe's attacks and teachings.

The Council of Pisa for the first time in history put a definite limitation on the Pope. Hitherto an immoral or wicked Pontiff could remain in power unchecked and unrestained, unless, indeed, a French King or a German Emperor took in hand to terrorise him. It was not, however, very creditable to the Church, that she had to be regulated and kept right in those eternal principles of righteousness and morality which it was her special vocation and mission to proclaim and extend, by worldly threateners and secular powers. The cardinals, however, at the Council of Pisa took action as to the rival Popes and the scandalous schism caused by Clement VII.'s election. The practical result of the rival papacy was that the belief in Christendom as to a visible and infallible Vicar of Christ was rudely shaken, and the Wycliffe idea spread abroad that "the head of the Church is Christ, and the unity of the Church consists in union with Him and not in union with any particular Pope." The ecclesiastical views propounded at the Council of Pisa by D'Ailly bore the strongest resemblance to Wycliffe's doctrines, and virtually restored to the clergy and laity the rights of which the Pope had robbed them. He held that a general council could be summoned by the cardinals, or even by a company of the faithful, and might call upon the supreme Pontiff for an account of his stewardship.

On Lady Day, 1409, the council met in the cathedral of Pisa, with twenty-two cardinals and some four hundred prelates and abbots and representatives of

the Courts of Europe, excepting Spain, altogether about a thousand members. Baldassare Cossa was president, —himself afterwards to be made Pope, and to disgrace the tiara. The rival Popes were summoned to appear, but refused; and on 25th May, Gregory and Benedict were pronounced by this council of prelates contumacious, and on 5th June they were deposed. The King of Arragon and Benedict's ambassadors begged to be heard, but the council was firm, and proceeded to elect a successor. The president of the council, Baldassare Cossa, was naturally suggested; but he begged to be passed, and the lot fell on Peter Philargi, a learned Greek over seventy years of age, who took as his title Alexander v. Other reforms were considered, and the council dissolved on 7th August 1412, happy in the thought that unity had been restored to Christendom.

It was, however, only a dream. The cardinals had not reckoned with Benedict and Gregory and their friends, and the result was only to add another claimant to the papal See. Alexander lived less than a year, and favoured the Franciscans, of whom he had been one, to such a violent extent that the University of Paris rose in arms. Cossa, his legate in Italy, fought his claims so strenuously that finally Rome was captured for his side. Baldassare Cossa began life as a pirate; and, while a man of enormous energy and pushfulness, was absolutely devoid of moral principle and honourable ideas; and even Italy stood aghast at his profligacies. Naples was, however, menacing Rome, and Cossa was the only man fit to stand in the breach and keep the Eternal City for the Pope, and accordingly on Alexander's death he was elected under the title of

John XXIII. Victory was not, however, to be his: Naples grew in strength, and Ladislas, though defeated, was powerfully arrogant, and in June 1411 the Pope had to give way so far as to admit Ladislas to be King of the Sicilies in return for a promise that he would bring about the abdication of Gregory XII.

The prorogued Pisan Council promised for 1412 took place in Rome in 1413, and began its memorable proceedings by publicly burning Wycliffe's writings on the steps of St. Peter's on the 13th of February, and publishing a strong condemnation of his views,—the very views which at Pisa they had so largely adopted and acted on. Strangely, an owl settled on the Pope's head at vespers in the Sistine chapel on the eve of the council's proceedings; and the ill omen was true, for the council was a failure, did nothing, and informally broke up. John announced another one for December 1413, but in the meantime the King of Naples took Rome, the Pope fled, and finally at Cremona put himself under the protection of the German King Sigismund, and Pope and King unitedly fixed a general council to be held at Constance for November 1414, to which Sigismund summoned Gregory and Benedict and the Kings of France and Arragon.

Ladislas died in the autumn of 1414, and Rome was now safely in John XXIII.'s hands. His political alliance with Sigismund, however, had to be carried out, for the German sovereign was bent on restoring peace, harmony, and unity to Christendom, and accordingly very unwillingly on John's part the Council of Constance began on 5th November 1414. The Council of Pisa thought it had restored unity to Christendom by electing a Pope who owned that

councils were above Popes, and his acceptance of this fundamental position was the reason why he got the popular following which he did. Had he claimed, as Gregory and Benedict each still did, that the Pope had the sole and only voice, his contract would have ceased, and his position would have been forfeited. But even yet Benedict XIII. had the support of Spain, and even in Italy many clung to Gregory XII. The position of affairs seemed hopeless.

The Council of Constance was attended at the close by 5000 members and 100,000 visitors, and set its face vigorously in the direction of Church reform. Firstly, it was urged that the decrees of the Council of Pisa should be recognised, and that for the future, in order to keep the Pope in his right position relative to the cardinals and people generally, as only sharing in the *plenitudo potestatis* and not absorbing it altogether to the exclusion of everyone else, as the Popes had been doing,—a general council should be held every ten years. D'Ailly desired to acknowledge the Pisan decrees, but deprecated the stringent measures taken towards the Popes, and urged that while Popes have erred, so have councils, and that the councils' decisions were only of value as they represented the views of universal Christendom. Sigismund espoused D'Ailly's view, and declared for reform as the essential preliminary to reunion. The ambassadors of Gregory and Benedict were received; the council divided itself into nations,—Italian, German, French, and English, who debated separately and then held a united conference. The result was known by the 16th of February. The German, French, and English nations voted that John XXIII. should abdicate, while the Italian nation

stood by him. At last, on 1st March, he agreed to abdicate on condition that Gregory and Benedict did likewise; on 20th March, however, he suddenly fled from Constance and took refuge at Schaffhausen. The council, though bereft of its papal head, went on, and finally declared that it was not only independent of, but superior to the Pope. John protested against the validity of the council: the cardinals, fearing that Sigismund's proposed reforms would be detrimental to their interests, adopted a Fabian policy, and started a series of discussions which, with other negotiations, kept the council. The end of the matter was, however, that John XXIII. was deposed, and a few weeks later Gregory XII. abdicated, while Benedict XIII. retained only a feeble following in Spain. Huss and Jerome of Prague, the troublesome Bohemian Reformers, were burned, Wycliffe's ashes were, at the childish bidding of the council, sent down the Swift to season the whole world, and the council was now face to face with the positive reform and reconstruction of the Holy See and of the Christian faith. The council practically declared itself above the Pope, and there was a strong rush for liberty and reform,—the direct results of Wycliffe's quiet thinkings in Oxford and Lutterworth. There was to be reform, but churchmanship as well. Sigismund took upon himself the *rôle* of pacificator, and endeavoured te unite all Europe against the menacing Turks. After countless negotiations, it was agreed to elect a Pope who should reform the Church in the matter of eighteen heads, and this before the council was dissolved. On 11th November the Roman cardinal Oddo Colonna, a poor man of illustrious family and fine character, was elected under the title of Martin V.

The Council of Constance had sat for three years, and the several thousand delegates were wearied out. Everyone was anxious to be off, and hopeful of better and brighter days to come. The new Pope began by condemning the heresies of Wycliffe and Huss, and many reforms were passed; and it was agreed that the eighteen articles of reform should be dealt with by concordats or committees with the different nations. Very little came of sending these matters down to committee, and the next council was to complete the reforming work. On 22nd April 1418 the Council of Constance was dissolved. The Council of Pavia in 1423 succeeded it, meeting afterwards at Sienna; but it was not representative, and the conciliar movement for Church reform would have died out but for its revival in the Council of Basle in 1431,—a council called mainly because Bohemia was in arms.

Pope Martin V. very soon became universally accepted by a Church which was sick to death of ecclesiastical distractions. John XXIII. submitted in 1419 and was rewarded with a cardinal's hat, which he only wore for a short time, when he died. Benedict's cause in Spain gradually vanished. When he died in 1424, three of his cardinals elected his successor Clement VIII., and one chose a Pope for himself—Benedict XIV. In 1429 Clement gave in and was made Bishop of Majorca, while in 1432 Benedict was sent to Pope Martin and imprisoned.

There was now one Pope over Europe, and so far the Council of Constance accomplished the unity of the Church. But Bohemia could not forget Huss and Jerome, and on Wenzel's death in 1419 Sigismund succeeded and found the country in revolution. The

Bohemians rose in arms, ruined their churches, destroyed everything that bore the mark of German art or Catholic allegiance. The old Slavonic spirit was re-awakened, and joined hands with the Hussite Puritanism and defied the Pope and the Roman Church. In time this patriotic Hussite party split into Calixtins or those who allowed the cup to the laity in the Supper, and radical reformers of various kinds who took up Wycliffe's socialistic ideas. Chief among the latter was John Žižka, who was an earnest Hussite and an admirable military organiser, and at his camp at Tabor formed a rallying point for the Taborites, finally crushed at the battle of Lipau in 1434. Previous to this the Council of Bâsle had striven, through Cardinal Giulano Cesarini, legate in Germany and president of the council, to make peace with Bohemia on very generous terms. But the Czech or radical religious movement could not be crushed, and spread from Bohemia into Germany and beyond, — the extreme reforming party being known as the "Unitas Fratrum," or Bohemian Brethren or Moravians. It was to this impulse that the Wāldensian communities in Dauphiné and Piedmont owed their chief features. The Council of Bâsle was summoned mainly to settle the Bohemian difficulty; but after doing its best in that direction it tried to institute a perpetual control over the Pope, and introduced many reforming ideas regarding clerical life and conduct, freedom of election in churches, reductions in the number of cardinals, and above all the abolition of the right to levy dues on appointments to a benefice,—one of the special reforms demanded at an earlier day by Wycliffe. Charles VII. of France, in 1438, by the "Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges,"

recognised the council and placed its decrees, especially the matter of papal dues, on a legal footing in France. As with Wycliffe, he did not wish to see the money going out of the country into papal coffers with no visible return.

In 1438 the Diet of Mentz published a similar approval for Germany.

And then the Holy See took alarm. Martin v. died in 1431 and Eugenius IV. succeeded him, and, fearing further reforms, dissolved the council, which the fathers not only refused to do, but pronounced him disobedient to their will and worthy of suspension. Eugenius defied the general council, and held an independent council of his own at Ferrara and afterwards at Florence, and by these means seemed, at any rate, to score a success by reuniting the Greek Church with the Roman See,—a success which was very short lived, as the old cleavage again appeared with increased emphasis. It was now a war between council and Pope, and the council deposed Eugenius and chose an anti-Pope Felix v. Eugenius, however, gained the day; Felix abdicated: the Council of Bâsle died of exhaustion in 1448, and it was proved to the satisfaction of Christendom that the conciliar and papal supremacy were absolutely incompatible. A reaction came all over Christendom in favour of the papal as against the conciliar idea. In 1448 the Mentz decrees were abolished. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II., a clever Italian, engineered the matter and restored harmonious relations between council and Pope, although at the same time serving his own ends and grinding his own axe.

Pope Eugenius died on 27th February 1447, within

sight of the triumphs of the Vicar of Christ which his successors were to behold. The Pope arose out of all these contests with councils and kings a greater political and social force and power than ever. Nicholas v. succeeded him in 1447, and was becoming the patron of Humanism when the Turks knocked at the door of Christendom once more, and the Pope was called upon to become chief defender of the Faith. In 1444 Cardinal Cesarini led a Hungarian army against the infidel and was defeated. Panic seized all Christendom. Nicholas proclaimed a crusade, but Germany was weak and divided. In 1456 Callixtus III. became Pope, and led the crusading cause. The Turks were beaten back at Belgrade. In 1458 Pius II. succeeded, and again initiated crusades, although regarded as the model of the secular man of letters of his time. He knew what was expected of him and he did it, and organised the last crusade. The Popes up till then were the champions of Christendom and the leaders of the crusades against the infidels: from this date this aspect of their life and character waned, and they confined themselves chiefly to Italy,—the sovereigns of the Papal States in the first place, and the Vicars of Christ for the world in the second.

The claim of the Pope to be the supreme judge and director of the consciences of men, of the peasant that tills the field, of the prince that sits on the throne, of the household that lives in the shadow of privacy, and the legislature that makes laws for kingdoms, the sole, last, supreme judge of what is right and wrong, was still adhered to; but as a matter of historical fact the special end and aim of the Holy See from this time forward and for several generations

was the conservation of the Pope's temporal dominions and his status as a European prince, with his own territories, court, and army, and thus he came to live in an exclusively Italian world, content that, if this were secure, his spiritual sovereignty over the earth would generally be acknowledged and accepted.

The spirit of reform, however, was abroad all over Europe,—the first reform movement initiated by the Lutterworth rector. The Council of Basle came to a somewhat ignominious ending, but the desire was widely expressed all over Christendom that another council should be convened to settle the disputes and difficulties which beset the Church on every side. France and Germany especially were loud in their demands for a new council, while England remained for the most part silent. Except among those who were immediately around the Pope, the feeling was general that if the Church was to be a living spiritual power in the world, a better religious and moral example must be set by its head, and the general demoralisation of the Church and its courts rectified. The same feeling was over the Roman Church as in the post-Reformation epoch,—a feeling of despair and hopelessness and distrust, from which the latter was saved only by the joyful news of the triumph of Christian missions in the Far East, where St. Francis Xavier and his companions won fresh triumphs for Christ's Cross.

Spain began the work of ecclesiastical reform with great zeal and much promise. The long crusade of Christians against the menacing Moors kept alive the zeal for Catholicism. Ferdinand of Arragon and Isabella of Castile, when they united the two crowns, carried on the reforming work inside the Church,

curtailing the Pope's patronage and coming to terms with the Pope, so that Sixtus IV. undertook that only Spaniards approved by the Crown should be appointed to the high offices of the Church. Papal Bulls, having to do with the legal rights of private persons, were to be held invalid unless approved by the civil courts. The Church and its spiritual revenues were to be taxed as in other secular cases. Cardinal Ximenes introduced reforms regarding Church discipline by which only men of high moral and spiritual attainments could hold ecclesiastical offices, and, himself a friar of the most ascetic order, reproved monastic irregularities, deposed ill-doing Churchmen from their offices, and so used the royal patronage that only learned and pious men were made prelates.

Observing the miserable educational standard of the rank and file of the clergy, he founded colleges and seminaries, which in course of time turned out scores of eminent divines and scholars. Spanish Christianity, from its close association with Moorish Mohammedanism, was now largely militant; and not only were the Moors gradually driven out of the country, leaving behind them stately memorials of their presence in the Alhambra and other Oriental structures, but the Jews were next taken in hand and subjected to fierce persecution. In Rome at the present day the buildings of the Inquisition are entirely closed; and perhaps it is as well, for the memory of its doings is far from being fragrant; but it was not really in Italy but in Spain that the Holy Office had its first beginning. It was Pope Sixtus IV. who in 1480 founded the Inquisition, originally an ecclesiastical court to deal with heresies and to punish offenders with spiritual penalties, and if

necessary to hand them over to the civil powers for physical treatment. The civil and ecclesiastical powers worked hand in hand to suppress heresy and disorder. But the reforming movements inside the Church were not confined to the suppression of error and heresy; the humanist movement took a curious phase, not as in Italy in drawing away men's minds from religion and theology, but in deepening and enlarging faith. Cardinal Ximenes brought out the first polyglot Bible, —the fruit of the revival of Greek and the Renaissance spirit, of which Dante was the leading prophet.

The real cause of the attraction Dante has had for six centuries, and still has for those who read him, lies in the vast comprehensiveness of his intellectual view, combined with the deepest and tenderest human feeling. Dante still shows us, as no other writer does, how he took the fruit of knowledge for his food; how he lived through life and overcame it, till his spirit moved in the realm of moral freedom, which is the earthly paradise to every toiling man.

The reforming spirit within the Church appeared even in Italy, but it became more of an intellectual than a religious movement, indeed to some extent it developed into rationalism and even infidelity. Florence was to a great extent the centre of this wonderful influence, which had as its object the restoration of Greek forms of thought and reasoning, and the substitution of Plato for the long-worshipped Aristotle. Marsiglio Ficino and his pupil Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were the leading spirits of this Florentine school of thought, which, echoing the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, tried to fuse Platonic thought with Hebrew and Christian ideas,—an effort which very

nearly brought Pico to be excommunicated by the Holy See. But the leading reforming spirit in Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century was Girolamo Savonarola, an ascetical Dominican friar in St. Mark's, Florence, who threw himself enthusiastically against the cold religious indifference of his age, and with tongues of fire warned Florence of its coming doom. His pure and blameless life, his purity of faith and doctrine, made him a marvellous power as a preacher of righteousness, to whom sin was sin whether in the Vatican or in the noble house of the Medici. He came to believe himself to be the God-sent saviour of Italy; and when, after scourging the sins of the Medici, he declared in apocalyptic style that the scourge of God would come, unfortunately, when Charles VIII. and the French invaded Italy, he regarded them as the messengers of Heaven to chasten Italy. The embassy sent out to meet Charles included Savonarola himself, and when the Medici were driven from power, Savonarola and his party became all-powerful. And then the tide turned, and after a year the French beat an ignoble retreat, leaving Savonarola and his party to face the wrath of the Pope. The intrepid friar was first forbidden to preach, to which he replied by denouncing the Roman See; for which he was excommunicated on 13th May 1497. Still Florence was with him, and the magistrates asked him to resume preaching in the cathedral. The Pope was distinguished for few virtues, and a general desire was abroad for a general council to reform the Church,—a movement naturally favoured by Charles VIII. for political reasons, and by the fiery monk from a pure desire to see the Augæan stable cleansed. A reaction set in in Florence against

Savonarola, and he was taken prisoner on 8th April 1498 and brought to his trial. Under the severest torture he admitted his heresy like Cranmer, and even declared himself, through a heated examination, to be a prophet of lies; whereupon the Pope sent commissioners to Florence, and after a strict trial he and two of his disciples were declared heretics, and on the 23rd of May were hanged on a gallows in the old Florentine palace and burned to death. Savonarola's only offence was that he desired the ecclesiastical reforms initiated by the Council of Constance to be carried through; but insensibly the religious and ecclesiastical questions involved glided into the sphere of politics; and though his only desire as a Reformer was to put into practice the proposals of Gerson and D'Ailly, and himself considered that he was a religious martyr, he was only the scapegoat of political expediency, and was in every sense of the word the subject, like the Nazarene Himself, of a judicial murder. Not religion, but ecclesiastical politics, organised from the Vatican, sent Savonarola to the stake. In reality his voice was only the continuation of the protest raised by the Council of Constance and by individual Churchmen against the abuses of the Holy See and the corruptions of the Vatican and of the Church generally.

The reforming movement which was felt in Spain and Italy spread to Germany, where, long before the Reformation set in, there was heard the voice of "an infant crying for the light,"—the desire of great and good men to have the Church made more worthy of her high calling, and more truly real in the practice of that faith which she professed. Among those earlier Reformers in Germany whose thoughts never

drifted towards separation but only towards purification and betterment, were the various Mystics, the Friends of God, the Brethren of the Common Life, and others, some of them moderate, others extravagant in their spiritual views and aspirations. One of the earliest of these, Master Eckhart, in the fourteenth century, was an earnest disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas, and, like Wycliffe, spread the gospel of Christ among the common people by popular preaching and preachers; and he with Tauler and others stirred up a fresh desire for the reform of abuses in the Church, though never in the direction of revolutionary and separatist measures. The Mystics were the spiritually and devotionally-minded men within the Church, and all they asked was that the Bride of Christ should be reasonably worthy of her great Head, and that by personal piety and a deepened spiritual life she should prove herself Christ's Angel upon earth, crowned with stars and clothed with the sun. Their aspirations in the direction of a deeper realisation of religious ideals have been often revived not only in the Roman but in the Reformed Churches, and even in the Churches of the present day, when mechanicalism, formalism, and indifference have become paramount. The Brethren of the Common Life, who had their origin in the house founded by Gerard Groot at Deventer, were very much on the same lines; and leaving ecclesiastical reforms as dealt with by councils to Providence, set themselves about cultivating personal piety and family devotion. Whether the *Imitation of Christ* was written by Thomas à Kempis, and came from their inner circle, or was the work of Gerson, will probably never be settled: it will in all probability

for ever remain a riddle, like the Casket Letters, the Bruce-Logan poems, the Epics of Ossian, and the other mysteries of literature. At any rate, the Common Life Brethren knew and loved the *Imitatio*, and had no small hand in giving and revealing to a Christendom which had lost its first love and early fire, and to a world which was growing old and weary at heart, a soul-manual which is acceptable to every Christ-follower and nourishing to every earth-pilgrim. If the *Pilgrim's Progress* gives the list of Christian enemies and struggles, the *Imitation* tells the story of Christian peace and communion with the Lord, and both manuals together form an incomparable guide-book to heaven. In addition to the cultivation of devotion, however, the Common Life Brethren through personal and individual influence strove to purify the monastic life and elevate the tone of German Christianity, the chief mover in this direction, strange to say, being the papal legate himself (1451), Nicolas Krebs of Cues, commonly styled Cusanus, who had been educated at Deventer and attended the Council of Basle, following in the main the general policy of Æneas Sylvius. The Renaissance spirit which was bringing fresh intellectual life to Italy gradually spread to Germany through the influx of the young men of the Fatherland, who imbibed the sentiments of a high intellectualism and a serene morality, which, coming home, they diffused all over the country of their birth. From having only five universities in the fourteenth century, Germany in the early years of the fifteenth increased them to seventeen. The modern spirit seized the country through this strong Italian influence, and Humanism became the rage.

Nor was it entirely a secular movement, for the spirit of revival touched the sphere of German theology, and such men as Agricola and Reuchlin strove to bring fresh ideas and thoughts into what had hitherto been a dry mediæval study; and in this reinvigorated theology its pioneers were enormously assisted by the newly discovered art of printing, which became the special handmaid of knowledge both secular and sacred.

It must be clearly understood that in this revival movement there was no disloyalty to the Catholic faith. Christian worship was never more reverently attended to, the Virgin never more affectionately invoked, while miracles, relics, pilgrimages, and the things generally against which the Lutheran Reformation set its face were never more assiduously believed in. It was a reforming movement from within, instigated by earnest devotional spirits who wished the Church to return to its first love. The pale-faced, gentle neophyte, who in the historic picture is represented standing in the monastery stall with coarse, red-faced, sensual, spitting monks beside and opposite him, represents very faithfully the attitude and position of these spiritually-minded men who sighed after heaven and God. What must they have thought and felt towards the unspiritual wire-pullers who in Rome and Germany were managing the household of faith? The news of papal corruptions, of course, reached their ears, and cooled their ardour in giving and their loyalty in defending the institution; but still the spirit of opposition tarried in making its appearance. Even Indulgences were accepted by them, until, seeing the gross abuse of this form of spiritual

shopkeeping, John of Wesel, a theological teacher in the University of Erfurt, attacked the practice, only to be silenced by an ominous threat from the hierarchy. Another John Wessel of Gröningen, trained by the Common Life Brethren, preached and taught what was on one side practically Wycliffism in the matter of being guided solely by the Bible, and Lutheranism in the matter of justification by faith in Christ alone. In addition, he wished a return,—one of the foundation ideas of the system in which he had been trained, to the primitive life of the early Christians. A beautiful and simple life like his disarmed all opposition, and he neither attacked the Church nor suffered for his opinions. In addition, the Bohemian brethren were leavening Germany with their principles and ideas,—some of them as to Church and State being revolutionary and extreme, but the national antagonism between Germany and Bohemia prevented any general acceptance of their ultra-reforming notions. The spirit of the reforming portion of the German people was not revolutionary: only reforms of gross abuses were called for, and the study of Scripture, the Renaissance spirit, the thirst of the land for a spiritual Church and for spiritual Churchmen, brought about aspirations which gradually deepened into criticisms of the existing state of affairs, and finally culminated in the German Reformation, led by a homely Teuton, a miner's son, who gathered up the feelings of his country, and so spoke them and acted them that finally he shook the world.

In England practically the same movement took the same form of development. The Humanist movement led a number of earnest Churchmen like John Colet,

Dean of St. Paul's, whose disciple Erasmus was, to live more earnest Christian lives after Bible patterns. The spirit of Wycliffe was mingled with the spirit of the Renaissance. But, as in Germany, in course of development, aspiration became criticism, and criticism led to opposition, and opposition to revolution and reformation. The English Reformation was a mixed movement, partly the culminating of the old Wycliffe influences, partly the result of Henry's rupture with the Pope, but chiefly through the infusion of the German reforming spirit, with the little monk of Erfurt at its head.

Reforming Churchmen all over Europe still hoped for another general council, which would continue the work of the Council of Basle, and at last, after many hopes deferred and struggles protracted, Pope Julius II., the successor of Alexander II., so exasperated his cardinals that they summoned the famous Council of Pisa, held in the cathedral of the leaning tower and Galileo's swinging lamp. Both of these objects were typical of the state of mind of these cardinals, for uncertainty was in the air as to everything. This council (1511) was afterwards moved to Milan. In counterblast to these councils, Pope Julius summoned a council in 1512 in the Lateran Palace; the cardinals suspended the Vicar of Christ for not obeying their orders to appear at Milan, to which the Pope replied by declaring their council void and themselves guilty of schism. Partly owing to the state of Italy and to the fact that the council which had a Pope at its head was more acceptable than a rabble of rebellious cardinals, Julius triumphed, though he died before his council finished. Leo X., who succeeded him, continued

his predecessor's policy, and reassembled the Lateran Council, the cardinals moved their council from Milan to Lyons, and finally submitted, uniting in the Lateran Council with their head in the great work of restoring the faith and practice of the Church. The spread of Humanism must have been enormous, when the council found it necessary to pronounce a decree declaring the immortality and individuality of the soul, and forbidding the clergy to spend more than five years in secular studies,—evidently the newly discovered Greek works set free by the fall of Constantinople, which were changing the intellectual and moral temper of Europe, and even leavening the Church and the Holy See itself,—unless theology and canon law were added to these studies. The council then discussed the reform of the Vatican and of the monastic orders; but procrastination was the predominant spirit. In 1515 some small decrees were passed. In 1516, when the council re-assembled, Pope Leo felt strong enough in his position to take definite action. The council warned preachers to avoid dangerous and scandalous topics, annulled the Pragmatic Sanction which gave the Gallican Church special liberties, resulting in a practical gain to Francis I., enlarged the powers of bishops and priests, and dissolved on 16th March 1517. The only important result of the Lateran Council was that the French Church was humiliated, while reforms, over which the members were hopelessly divided, were practically passed by on the other side. The Courts of Europe, saving France, took no notice of a council which practically showed its imbecility and powerlessness to act in the eyes of the world so marvellously, that the popular feeling over a large portion of

Christendom was that if the Church and its officers could not cleanse the Temple, it was high time that someone else came in with his scourge, not of small but of thick cords, to drive out the weaklings who posed as the Church's heads. That someone else came, in the person of Martin Luther, who threw his ink-bottle at the devil and his theses at the Pope. From the quiet rectory of Lutterworth, with its earnest seeker after truth, to the church door of Würtemberg, and Luther hammering up his written charges against the Pope, is a far cry; but the one scene is the parent of the other, and Wycliffe was in the largest sense the Morning Star of the Reformation.

The saintly, simple, and well-beloved Guiseppe Sarto-Joseph Taylor, Patriarch of Venice, was crowned Pope of Rome, Pius X., in August 1903. The venerable Leo XIII. on his deathbed was encouraged as he passed through the valley of the shadow by his cardinals' assurance—"Our prayers will help you"; to which he whispered in reply, "I am going to eternity." Sarto's election was a compromise; and when he heard the news he fainted, and little wonder, at the thought of the awful responsibilities laid upon one frail human being. He went forth from the city of St. Mark, with its canals, amid the tears and laments of everybody. He often pawned his episcopal ring to raise money for the destitute; and when he was elected Sovereign Pontiff the fish-seal was out. All Venice followed him out in sorrowful farewell. I was present at his coronation

in St. Peter's. The vanishing nature of all earthly crowns was illustrated to him, as of old, by the melting of a waxen toy edifice in a golden bowl. "Sic transit gloria mundi." On the day following, wandering through the endless and glorious arcades and galleries of the Vatican, I saw a little crowd gathered round one of the innumerable glass cases in these miles of treasure-halls. An aged, gentle, saintly-looking divine in black cassock and bands, with his comely youthful chaplain beside him, was on the outside fringe. It turned out that he was a canon of Rouen Cathedral, down for the coronation. I asked him respectfully what was the object of interest, to which query he courteously replied: "It is the Codex Vaticanus—Codex B"; and, turning again round to me, added—"It is the greatest treasure of the Vatican, and the most precious thing in the world." I was glad to hear him say so,—that the Holy Scripture was the greatest thing in the world. It was exactly what John Wycliffe said five and a half centuries before. It is what the Roman Church will yet come to see, and is coming to see every day, in spite of trammelling superstition and deadening mechanicalism. It is what the world will yet see, for Dean Stanley's favourite text carved round his monument in Westminster Abbey sums the whole matter up—"I have seen an end of all perfection, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

NOTE TO PAGE 147

Sir E. M. Thompson, director and librarian of the British Museum, in his little volume prepared for the Exhibition of Wycliffe MSS. and relics in 1884, has enumerated the MSS., and commented on them with great fulness, as also the pre-Wycliffite translations of the Bible and service-books in English. These latter he summarises as follows :—

1. The "Lindisfarne Gospels" or "Durham Book," written about 709 A.D. by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, in honour of his predecessor S. Cuthbert. It is a magnificently illuminated volume, containing the Vulgate Gospels, with interlinear translations and glorious illuminations, and is now one of the treasures of the British Museum.
2. The Four Gospels in Anglo-Saxon—ix century.
3. The Four Gospels in Anglo-Saxon—xii century.
4. Pentateuch and Joshua in Anglo-Saxon, by Alfric, Archbishop of Canterbury (1006).
5. Psalter and canticles, prayers and hymns—700 A.D.
6. Psalter with canticles, creeds, etc.—x century.
7. Psalter with canticles, creeds and hymns—xi century.
8. Psalter—metrical translation in northern dialect—xiv century.
9. Psalter—metrical translation—xiv century.
10. Psalter—metrical translation—xiv century.
11. Psalter in Latin and English—xiv century.
12. Psalter in Latin and English, with English commentary—xiv century.
13. Psalter in Latin and English, with English commentary by Richard Rolle—1400 A.D.
14. Ditto, revised by a Lollard, 1450.
15. Treatise in dialogue form between two people embodying Bible history—*c.* 1390.
16. The Lay Folks' Mass-book in English, with devotions for the people—1170-5.
17. Prymer or prayer-book, containing psalms and prayers—*c.* 1420.
18. Ditto, revised, with a calendar. Opposite May 21, 1382, is the entry, "Here was the earthquake,"—the event which made Wycliffe's "Earthquake Synod" famous.

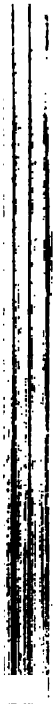
The learned and courteous chief-librarian of the British Museum has kindly allowed me to make these extracts from his valuable book, besides personally showing me the more valuable MSS. in the Museum under his care.

NOTE TO PAGE 264

The Rev. Professor Cooper, D.D., Glasgow University, kindly gives the following note:

"The only Wickliffite MS. we have in the *Hunterian* is a MS. copy of his *Bible* in the original boards: a small thick quarto. It presents no peculiarity, and its *provenance* is not known: it came to us as part of Dr. William Hunter's collection. Still it is interesting that a copy of the work remains in the city where the Lollards of Kyle so narrowly escaped—it is said by one Scottish king's graciousness—the fate which so many of their brethren underwent at the hands of the cruel—if glorious—Plantagenets. Henry V. was one of their bitterest persecutors.

"The Stuarts had their faults; and one would not like to have been obliged to trust the tender mercies of Charles II. and James VII.; and even James I., our poet-king, brought cruel notions of severity from his English prison. But naturally the Stuarts were gentle."



INDEX

Abelard, 7.
Ælfred, 43.
Ærius, 3.
Agnes' Eve, 75.
Agobard, 3.
Albigenses, 10.
Alderson, 145.
Alexander II., 123.
Alfred, 151.
Ambrose, 82.
Anne of Bohemia, 283.
Anselm, 7.
Arundel, 163, 206.
Aston, John, 201.
Athanasius, 104.
Avignon, 74, 105, 124.

Babylonish Captivity, 74.
Ball, John, 135.
Balliol College, 60, 66.
Barnard Castle, 35.
Beaton, Cardinal, 279.
Bede, 151.
Beghards, 15.
Beguines, 15.
Bernard of Clugny, 65.
Black Friars, 121.
Bohemian Brethren, 308, 319.
Boniface VIII., 71.
Bracton, 29.
Bradwardine, 31.
Bruges, 74, 97.
Burscher, Archbishop, 229.
Bute, Marquis of, 191.

Cædmon, 59, 148.
Caitiff, Poor, 141.
Canossa, 82.
Canterbury Convocation, 101.
Chichely, 223.
Claude of Turin, 5.
Clement V., 74.
Clement VII., 112, 156.
Cobham, Lord, 216.
Colet, Dean, 237.
Columba, 36.
Constance, Council of, 225, 291.
Courtenay, 102, 137.
Craig, John, 188.
Culdees, 37, 253.
Cuthbert, 44.

Dante, 313.
Dominic, 116.
Dominicans, 17.
Durham MS., 147.

Earthquake Council, 138.
Eckhart, 316.
Egglestone, 58.

Fitzralph, 30.
Forshall, 151.
Fox, 251.
Francis, 114.
Franciscans, 17, 113.
Friars, 113, 128.

Gaunt, John of, 103.
Gospel Oaks, 133.
Gregory XI., 111.
Grossetête, 25.

Henry VIII., 247.
Hereford, Nicholas, 141, 159.
Heretics, 80.
Hughes, William, 184, 195.
Humanists, 319.
Hunne, Richard, 239.
Huss, John, 290.

Indulgences, 253.
Innocent III., 86.
Inquisition, 312.
Isidorian Decretals, 76.
Islip, Simon, 66.

James I., 214.
Jerome, 155.
Jerome of Prague, 298.
John, King, 24, 71, 90.
John of Gaunt, 93.
Jovinian, 4.

Kennedy, 275.
Knighton, 164.
Knox, 259.
Kyle Lollards, 262.

Lambeth, 109.
Lancaster, Duke of, 101.
Lasserre, Henri, 178.
Lincoln College, 225.
Lindisfarne, 147.
Lindsay, Sir David, 48, 174.
Lollards, 132, 199.
Luther, 135, 322.
Lutterworth, 99, 157.

Manning, 34, 87.
Marsiglio, 22.
Martin V., 307.
Merton, 62.
Miracle Plays, 166.
Moors, 312.
"Mysteries," 170.
Mystics, 316.

Neville, Archbishop, 230.
Nicholas III., 19.
Nicholas V., 310.
Nisbet's Scots Testament, 265.

Oaths, 79.
Observants, 20.
Ockham, William of, 21.
Offices of State, 94.
Olivi, 20.
Oxford, 108, 212.

Parker, John, 203.
Parliament, "Good," 100.
Pecock, Bishop, 228.
Percy, Lord, 103.
Peter's Pence, 100.
Philip the Fair, 72.
Piers Plowman, 32, 122.
Pisa, 302.
Pius IX., 88.
"Poor Preachers," 166, 200.
Pope's Curse, 84.
Popes of Rome, 77.
Præmunire, 96, 231.
Prague, 285.
Purvey, John, 143.

Quintin, Kennedy, 263.

Radbert, 7.
Ratramnus, 7.
Resby, John, 210.
Richard II., 106.
Richard of Armagh, 30.
Russel, 275.
Ruthwell Cross, 149.

Sarto, Guiseppe, 322.
Savonarola, 314.
Sawtree, William, 208.
Shepherd's Calendar, 246.
Spresswell, 56.
Stanley, Dean, 187, 323.
Stevenson, Father, 177, 194.
Sudbury, Archbishop, 111.
Sum of Theology, 141.
Swift, 144.

Thorpe, William, 210.
Trialogus, 134.
Tunstall, 249.
Tyball, 250.
Tyler, Wat, 135.

Urban VI., 112.

Vaticanus, Codex, 323.
Vigilantius, 4.
Vulgate, 142.

Walden, 184.
Waldenses, 9.
Wenceslaus, 283.
Wicket, 137.
Wishart, 278.
Wycliffe Bible MSS., 160.
Wye, 300.
Wykeham, 95.

Xavier, 311.
Ximenes, 312.

Young Movements, 2.

Žižka, John, 308.

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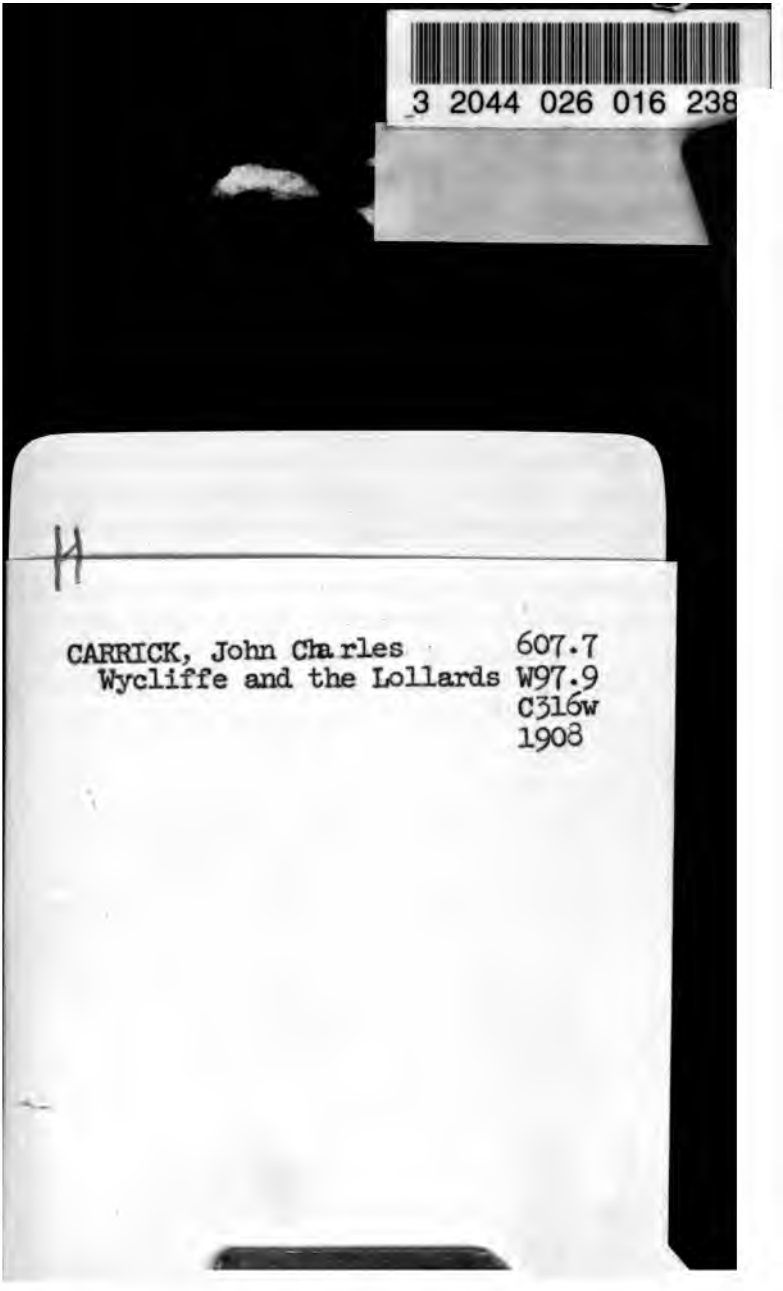
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